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Near East & South Asia

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Near East & South Asia

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Meeting on Displaced Palestinians Opens in Amman

Jordan's al-Kabariti Speaks

JN0703130295 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Foreign Minister, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, has said Jordan will insist on the repatriation of displaced Palestinians under the Geneva Conventions and international laws. However, the minister said the Kingdom would not force the Palestinians to leave the country if they decided to stay.

Mr. al-Kabariti was speaking at a meeting here in Amman on repatriating displaced Palestinians, being attended by himself, the Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers, as well as a senior representative of the Palestinian National Authority.

In his speech, Mr. al-Kabariti emphasized the high importance of the priority that Jordan attaches to the issue of displaced persons, refugees, and expellees. The minister pointed out it is Jordan's belief that resolving such issues is an integral part and defining point in the peace process. He said Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestinians in the diaspora, the overwhelming majority of whom carry Jordanian citizenship. However, he explained Jordan has always made it clear that this in no way prejudices the rights that they are entitled to in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

The minister emphasized that what participants must achieve in today's meeting should be the creation of mechanisms and modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967.

Also addressing the session was Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who stressed that the meeting was aimed at resolving the refugee problem, which the UN has been tackling since 1967. Mr. Musa noted that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and the PLO-Israel Declaration of Principles had underlined the importance of addressing the issue.

On his part, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Shim'on Peres, acknowledged that the issue of displaced persons is, first of all, a human one. Therefore, he suggested setting up a quadripartite continuing committee to deal with it.

Mr. Nabil Sha'th, who is in charge of international cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority, also spoke at the opening session. Mr. Sha'th said Jordan, Egypt, and the PLO had prepared a working paper that outlines the means and timetable for the repatriation of the displaced. He said the paper will be submitted to the meeting, attended by himself and Mr. al-Kabariti, as well as Egypt's 'Amr Musa and Israel's Shim'on Peres.

The one-day meeting at the al-Hashimiyah Palace in suburban Amman is in line with the Declaration of Principles, signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in September 1993. In the Declaration, Israel agreed to discuss the issue of displaced Palestinians, but it gave no promises on numbers or dates for repatriation.

Peres Views Mandate of Committee

JN0703153295 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres at the opening session of the quadrilateral meeting on displaced persons at the al-Hashimiyah Palace in Amman on 7 March—recorded, in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Foreign Minister of Egypt Mr. 'Amr Musa, Mr. Nabil Sha'th: At the outset, I would like to thank His Majesty King Husayn and yourself, Mr. Foreign Minister, for hosting this gathering in such an acceptable and agreeable way.

When we embarked on the peace process, we knew that the path would not be easy, and that we would face serious obstacles. Yet, we have the right to be encouraged by the historic achievements, not all of them of an immediate nature, and to draw from them the strength to move the process forward. This must have one final aim: The forging of a new Middle East escaping the suffering of the past, a Middle East, in which the human distress on all sides, brought about by years of belligerency will be replaced by regional cooperation, enhanced standard of living, and a better quality of life, a Middle East that will offer a stable place to every individual, displaced person or otherwise. To achieve this, we must deal with its relevant components. Article 8 of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan under the heading "Refugees and Displaced Persons" recognizes the massive human problems caused by both parties, by the conflict in the Middle East, as well as the contribution made by them towards the alleviation of human suffering. The article stipulates that the parties will seek to further alleviate those problems arising on a bilateral level. No reasonable human being can remain indifferent to the plight of the displaced persons. Whatever the reason for their situation, the picture is the same: Men, women, and children fleeing in fear of their lives with terror in their eyes, despair in their faces. They are abandoning their possessions, they are past the place to which they are tied and from which they are being torn.

The issue of displaced persons is, first of all, a human one, a call that rings stirringly to all of us, to our vast numbers of displaced persons throughout the region, many of them settled, many of them not yet. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and immigrants were successfully absorbed by Israel after the 1948 war. Over half came from countries in the Middle East. Moreover, Israel has demonstrated its positive approach by permitting the admission of a hundred thousand displaced persons in the West Bank and Gaza since 1967. Were it not for war and terror—and they are costing money and trust—, the problem of refugees and displaced persons would have found its dignified solution a long time ago. We need to adopt a strategy of rehabilitation to bring a solution, which should be mutually agreed upon, a solution just in character and realistic in implementation. It should be mutually agreed upon, because an imposed solution upon one side will not be a durable solution. It must be a just solution, because only a just arrangement will be convincing and accepted. Finally, it must be realistic, because only a realistic solution would enable us to mobilize the means and the goodwill from all the sides. To arrive to an agreed solution, we have to have an agreed agenda on the scope and the nature of the problem. The basic facts must be fully ascertained before we seek the answers. The need to relate this issue was recognized for the first time in 1978, when the Israeli and the Egyptian governments of the time introduced a clause in the Camp David accord calling for a quadripartite continuing committee to deal with it. It was repeated in the DOP [Declaration of Principles], which adopted the same clause, using identical language. The very same principle was also introduced in the peace treaty between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The platform and mandate of this committee are clearly and precisely defined in the DOP between us and the Palestinians, under which we are conducting our preliminary and informal consultation. Article 12 calls for the establishment of liaison and cooperation arrangements between the parties represented here. And the committee is instructed with the duty of deciding by agreement on the modalities of admission of thousands of displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. The DOP further requires us to deal with the other matters of common concern.

The peace agreement between Israel and Jordan established as a general principle that the parties believe that within their control, involuntary movement of thousands in such a way as to adversely prejudice the security of either party should not be permitted. The issue of displaced persons has interdependent and complex economic, social, administrative, and security ramifications that must be confronted earnestly by all of us and in all of their aspects. In practical terms, we must take care not to solve one problem by complicating existing problems, or by creating new ones.

The Middle East conflict has caused untold human agony, the several forms of which is undoubtedly the plague of unabated brutal violence against innocent and defenseless men, women and children, and by the senseless killing perpetrated by extremist, the extreme terrorist groups. It is therefore imperative that the deliberations of this committee will pay full attention to this serious problem and devote it all the rigor it demands. The DOP already recognized this principle by stating that the issue must be discussed together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder.

In an era of violence and belligerency, we shall hardly be able to solve the real problems. Only a real peaceful process, in an air and on the ground, will enable us to tackle the heavy demands that lie ahead of us. War created the problems; only peace can carry the solutions.

The economic and the social aspects are of vital importance. Indeed, the peace treaty relates to them by referring to the implementation of agreed United Nations programs and other agreed international economic programs concerning refugees and displaced persons, including assistance to their settlement. It is the aim of all of us here to handle the problem of displaced persons; yet needless to mention it, not only us, but also other Middle Eastern states, as well as the industrialized world should fully support this endeavor. We have to discover now creative ideas and how to overcome real hurdles stemming from different priorities, sensitivities, and timing. Let us not argue in vain. Let us mobilize our good spirit, a new experience to handle the challenges comprehensively and constructively. We should avoid the danger of sinking into endless polemics, accompanied by mutual accusations. We have to choose the alternative of examining, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and in a realistic manner, the main issues which hold the key to the discussion on the issue of displaced persons. Firstly, we must discover the fact how many people are concerned, where are they living, what are their preferences, what is the best way to solve the problem, what are the resources needed, and from where will they be attained. Secondly, what will be the regional and the international ramifications of dealing with this issue? And thirdly, what are the measures needed within the modalities of admission to prevent disruption and disorder?

I propose therefore, Mr. Chairman, the setting of a continuing committee that will deal with these different aspects of the problem. We have a saying in Hebrew: The completion of a task must be preceded by the right thought. This advice has both wisdom and relevance.

Thank you very much.

Opening Session Detailed

JN0703203095 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Italicized passages are recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, and the official in charge of international cooperation in the Palestinian Authority, who are participating in the meetings of the quadrilateral committee on the displaced persons, held a closed meeting at al-Hashimiyah Palace today to discuss topics on the agenda. The drafting committee began its work to draft the final statement which will be announced at the final session which will be held this evening. The quadrilateral committee meetings on the displaced began at the al-Hashimiyah Palace today with the participation of the foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, and the official in charge of international cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority. Details on the opening session of the committee's meetings in the following report:

[Unidentified correspondent] In his statement during the meeting, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti stressed that without a just settlement, that is accepted by all the parties, of the issue of the refugees, the displaced, and deportees, it is impossible to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, which is the objective of all the parties participating in the peace process.

He added that the three agreements which were reached by Egypt, Palestine, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with Israel have directly mentioned the right of repatriation for the displaced and the deportees. He said that all these agreements call for the formation of a continuing committee representing an appropriate structure to implement the principle of the repatriation of the displaced and deportees, and to set a timetable for their repatriation, within the transitional period, to their cities and villages, providing that this has been a commitment throughout the past years since the first peace agreement was signed between Egypt and Israel.

The foreign minister added: *It is important here to note that the majority of the diaspora Palestinians are living in Jordan. The majority of them, the refugees, came to Jordan following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. As for the displaced, they flowed into the kingdom during the second Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and after. These persons constitute the subject of our meeting. We must note here that the fact that the sweeping majority of the refugees and the displaced persons are enjoying the Jordanian citizenship must not endanger the rights they deserve in accordance with the international resolutions and the principles of the international law. In fact, having them enjoy the Jordanian citizenship gives Jordan special responsibility to continue efforts to reach a solution which secures their rights in full. If these rights are secured, then they should have the choice. Since the issue of the displaced is the axis of our meeting, we should recall the Jordanian role in hosting them and the burdens the Jordanian state have been shouldering right after the beginning of the evacuation process. In cooperation with United Nations Relief and Work Agency [UNRWA], the Jordanian Government has contributed to the establishment of six camps which are spread in various parts of Jordan, which, at the time, were called emergency camps, and supplied them with the infrastructures which are necessary for public services, such as roads, electricity, water, and sewage. The Higher Commission for the Relief of the Displaced was formed and took upon itself the distribution of food supplies, and is still carrying out this mission until now under the Palestinian Affairs Department which is affiliated with the Prime Ministry.*

At the appropriate time, Jordan will present full information about the financial burdens it has shouldered for all groups of Palestinians hosted by Jordan. It is worth mentioning that the continuation of the compulsory immigration of the displaced, as a result of the Israeli measures throughout the years which followed 1967, and the normal population growth in the displaced persons camps, have rendered these camps, which have limited area, too small for their inhabitants. This has encouraged a large number of them to leave these camps to live in the neighboring cities and villages so as to secure appropriate shelter and basic services, such as roads, electricity, schools, and health services. This has added heavy and costly burdens to the state budget.

Your Excellencies: The attendance of this meeting by the participating delegations proves the various parties' concern about reaching a solution to the issue of the displaced persons, the deportees, and their families. The Jordanian delegation believes that this solution must be a fair and honorable solution which guarantees the rights of the displaced, the deportees, and their families, and prevents the entrenchment of the painful fait accompli from which they are currently suffering. The aspired solution should be based on the following facts and criteria:

First, it has become common in accordance with the principles of international law that every citizen has the right to return to the original homeland from which he came. Regarding the displaced from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in addition to the principles of the international law, there is a clear and frank resolution issued by the UN Security Council; namely, Resolution 237 which calls on Israel to facilitate the return of those who left the occupied territories as a result of the 1967 war.

Second, guaranteeing the priority of the repatriation right of the Palestinian displaced and deportees of those who do not enjoy Jordanian citizenship, or those who bear a temporary Jordanian passport, with all their categories.

Third, any gradual or phased solution to the issue of the repatriation of the displaced should cover them all without exception. Therefore, it is useful to reach a common understanding on a number of bases and criteria which can be adopted to set a timetable for repatriation to be agreed upon and during a short time. Among these bases and criteria which can determine the priorities of repatriation to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip:

A. The reunion of the separated families.

B. The return of the bearers of the expired Israeli permits.

C. The return of the deportees.

D. The return of the persons who left the West Bank and the Gaza Strip via Israeli airports and ports with Israeli travel documents, laissez-passe, and who lost the right to return to their original place of residence.

E. The returnees from the Gulf after the 1990 war, who were outside their places of residence in the West Bank and Gaza during the 1967 war, and who could not return following the Gulf war, and thus, they stayed in Jordan.

F. The economic and social conditions of the displaced at their places of residence, and the effect of this on the surrounding societies.

G. The repercussions and harm which could be inflicted on the hosting country, as well as the burdens it has shouldered and is shouldering in this regard.

In his speech, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that the question of the displaced was one of the primary issues discussed by the United Nations since 1967, resulting in Security Council Resolution 237 which demanded safeguarding the safety, prosperity, and security of people in areas in which hostilities took place and the return of those who left their land since the outbreak of war. He said that the resolution on the displaced was preceded by the resolution on the settlement itself; namely, Resolution 242, which demonstrates the importance and sensitivity of the displaced people's issue.

The Egyptian minister noted that the Israeli agreements with Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, and Jordan stipulate the right of the displaced to return, and the formation of a quadrilateral committee for this purpose.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa added:

We are not meeting to discuss the displaced people's right to return and not to approve this right, because it is an inalienable, established right supported by the principles of international law, the UN resolutions, and the provisions of the three agreements that I have mentioned, the most important of which is the first document concerning the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles [DOP] and the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty.

Hundreds of thousands of those Palestinians who were forced to flee for their lives due to the war and its consequences, will bear with them the inextinguishable hope to return to their homes and homeland, which is their legitimate right. The war has forced them to flee and now peace opens a door for their return.

I am certain that this meeting will be a door for constructive and important work to tackle a major issue that faces us; namely, establishing just and durable peace; that is, the return of the displaced.

Mr. Chairman, we have come fully hopeful that we will take serious action and the practical measures leading us to start resolving this important subject. The Egyptian delegation will cooperate in pushing matters toward practical and speedy measures to deal with this important issue.

For his part, Israeli Foreign Minister Mr. Shim'on Peres said: When we began the peace process, we knew that the road would not be easy and that we would face serious obstacles. However, what was accomplished encouraged us to continue with vehemence.

He said that peace must have a final aim; namely, forming a new Middle East that would transcend the suffering of the past and would be based on regional cooperation and stability instead of war. Peres described the issue of the displaced as a humanitarian issue, noting that its solution must be just, realistic, and practicable. He said the meeting must have an agreed upon agenda on the extent and nature of the problem, noting that it is impossible to solve the displaced people's problem through violence but through peaceful dialogue, noting the importance of the economic and social aspects in this regard.

The Israeli minister called for employing expertise and goodwill to solve this problem and proposed forming a continuing committee to deal with the various issues related to the displaced people's issue.

In his speech, Dr. Nabil Sha'th, official in charge of international cooperation and head of the Palestinian delegation, noted the importance of holding this meeting in Amman as a result of the special relations that bind the Jordanian and Palestinian people. Dr. Sha'th congratulated His Majesty King Husayn on his recent successful surgery. Dr. Sha'th said:

We are meeting today to discuss one of the most important issues presented by the peace process, which began at the Madrid conference. This process assumed practical and positive dimensions on the ground after the DOP was signed in Washington, followed by the first agreement to implement it, which was signed in Cairo and called the Gaza-Jericho agreement, and later by the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement.

We emphasize that for the Palestinian people, the PLO, and the Palestinian National Authority on Palestinian soil, peace is a strategic option toward which our Palestinian people have looked in order to live in peace, safety, and trust in a new world whose dimensions we are aware of. It is our option which is based on right, justice, and safety for all peoples of the region. Through this peace, our people are looking forward to realizing their just rights to live in dignity on their soil and to regain all their rights to freedom, independence, and free choice of exercising their human rights on their soil, just like all peoples on this globe.

Therefore, the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, which constitutes part of the overall Arab-Israeli peace process and which is based on the Madrid conference principles and the agreements following it, is primarily composed of two parts. The implementation of the first part has begun with the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho and with the coming of the Palestinian National Authority and its establishment on Palestinian soil. We hope that the implementation of exercising this right will continue by continuing the implementation of the Oslo agreement on the West Bank and by swift progress toward completing *the pillars of the peace process to reach negotiations on the final status, leading to just and durable peace and realizing what was agreed on in Oslo in order to make this a just peace, not only between our Palestinian and Israeli peoples but by completing the peace process with Syria and Lebanon, a peace that encompasses all the Arab region with Israel.*

Sha'th noted that the Israeli agreements with Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, and Jordan have recognized the displaced people's right to return to their homeland and leave it to the committee to implement these agreements. He said the success of the committee's meeting will be a pushing factor and motive for realizing the entire peace process, opening a bright chapter to discuss the refugee issue at a later time.

The head of the Palestinian delegation added that the Palestinians are looking forward to implementing the agreement pertaining to the return of the displaced and facilitating their return in accordance with a timetable and mechanism in order to end this operation within the framework of the transitional phase. He noted that this operation constitutes a serious contribution to pushing the peace process forward and achieving progress.

Final Session Convened

JN0703173195 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The final session of the four-way Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli committee charged with discussing the return of the displaced Palestinians is currently convening at al-Hashimiyah Palace. The session will discuss and ratify the final statement which was prepared by the draft committee.

The committee held a closed session at noon today to discuss the subjects on its agenda.

Meeting Concludes; Statement Issued

JN0703191295 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1815 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A short while ago, the four-way committee on the displaced persons, attended by the foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, and Israel and the official in charge of planning in the Palestinian Authority, which met today at al-Hashimiyah Palace issued a final statement. The statement was read by Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti.

[Begin al-Kabariti recording] This is an unofficial translation of the statement issued by the meeting:

1. Delegations from Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the PLO met in Amman on 7 March 1995 as a continuing committee to agree on means of entry [asalib dukhul] for the Palestinians who were displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, taking into consideration the necessary measures to prevent chaos and disorder, and the other issues of mutual concern.

2. The ministerial meeting built on the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, its annexes, and the minutes agreed upon; as well as the provisions related to the displaced persons stipulated in the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty and the Camp David Accords.

3. The four parties agreed on the structure of the Continuing Committee on the displaced persons and the other issues of mutual concern. The committee will meet on both ministerial and technicians levels. On the technicians level, it was agreed that each delegation will comprise three high-level permanent members, who can be assisted by experts whenever the need arises. The meetings on the technicians level will be held on rotational basis. The first meeting for the committee will be held within a month as of today. The committee will meet in ordinary sessions once every three weeks. As regards the meetings on the ministerial level, the committee will meet on rotational basis once every two or three months. The technical delegation will present its reports to the ministerial level.

4. The Continuing Committee will discuss the relevant confidence-building measures.

5. The committee on the ministerial level has stressed its commitment to a swift solution to the displaced persons question in order to strengthen the peace process. Thank you. [end recording]

Al-Kabariti Says Talks Below 'Expectations'

JN0803102495 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 08 Mar 95 pp 1, 7

[By Ghadir Tahir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The first Arab-Israeli meeting on the key issue of repatriating Palestinians displaced in the 1967 war ended here on Tuesday [7 March] with the Arab side openly expressing disappointment that Israel was refusing to commit itself to agreeing to a mechanism for the return home of the Palestinians who were forced out of their homes 28 years ago.

Except an agreement to establish a committee to meet regularly to work out differences, the meeting produced little else in tangible progress towards resolving one of the thorniest issues in the Arab-Israeli process.

"I believe that the outcome was below the level of expectations," Foreign Minister Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti told reporters after several hours of closed-door talks with his Israeli and Egyptian counterparts, Shim'on Peres and Amr Musa respectively, and senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Nabil Sha'th.

"I hope the forthcoming meetings will move in the right direction of establishing the right of return of the displaced under the provisions of international law and the agreements signed with the Arab parties," said Mr. al-Kabariti.

The four ministers concluded their one-day meeting with a final communique setting up two committees—one which would meet at the ministerial level and another at the expert level to tackle the complex issues.

The final communique omitted any reference to international law or United Nations Security Council Resolution 237, which calls for the repatriation of Palestinians who fled their homelands as a result of the 1967 war.

The final communique also failed to mention the "right of return" instead using the term "modalities of admission."

According to observers, the omission of these two points was a victory for Israel, which apparently succeeded in blocking their inclusion in the statement.

Dr. Sha'th deplored "Israel's refusal to decide concrete measures in the framework of mutual confidence-building measures."

Dr. Sha'th told reporters he had hoped Israel would announce the immediate return of even around 100 displaced "as proof of its good will."

Dr. Sha'th, a veteran Palestinian negotiator with Israel, told reporters that the Palestinian side had expected the Israeli approach to the meeting.

"Our peace process with Israel so far has faced Israeli resistance on everything related to resolutions 242 and 338," Dr. Sha'th said. "So this was no different from the typical Israeli behaviour."

Looking somber after the session, Mr. Peres admitted that the meeting had failed to produce concrete results.

He renewed Israel's commitment to settling the issue of displaced Palestinians, but said any solution would have to take into account "measures that are necessary to avoid the disruption and the disorder in the territories."

According to officials at the meeting, Israel refused to accept a PLO request to accept the immediate return of 100 families in line with the family reunification programme as a confidence-building measure.

According to these officials, Israeli reservations about the return of displaced persons centered around an agreement that the occupied territories were not economically prepared or had the physical infrastructure to absorb the newcomers.

"I believe the result was modest and there were attempts by the Israeli side to complicate the issue to prevent the activation of the article on the mechanism and modalities for the return of the displaced persons," said Mr. al-Kabariti.

He said the Arab side had insisted that the repatriation take place during the timeframe of the transitional period of the PLO-Israeli declaration of principles. Mr. al-Kabarati did not say whether Israel had agreed to this timeframe.

"We hope that the next meeting will achieve what is expected and hoped for," said Mr. al-Kabariti, who stressed that peace would be meaningless without the right to return of the Palestinians scattered around in the Arab World.

Given that the Arab parties and Israel remain far apart on the very basic question—the number of displaced persons—observers had not expected the meeting to announce immediate solutions to one of the most sensitive issues on the negotiating table.

The Arab countries estimate the number of displaced at around 850,000. Israel puts the number at around 200,000 and the United Nations estimates that up to 700,000 persons fall into this category.

The formation of the committees to tackle the technical aspects related to the issue of displaced persons, including the number, criteria to be used to define eligibility for repatriation, modalities for their repatriation was seen by some as a necessity to begin finding a solution to the problem.

The delegates, who were hosted by His Majesty King Husayn for a working lunch, opened the meeting at the Hashemiyeh Palace with speeches stating their positions as to the requirements for a solution to the thorny issue.

From the onset, differences between the Arab parties and Israel over the approach to the solution were apparent.

While Israel tried to sidestep international law pertaining to the problem by describing the refugees as a "humanitarian problem," the Arab parties stressed that the return of the Palestinians was a legal issue enshrined by United Nations resolutions and international conventions.

"No normal human being could ignore the suffering of the displaced regardless of the reasons ... it is a humanitarian problem," Mr. Peres told the three Arab ministers and their delegations in opening remarks.

Mr. Peres did not reject the right of return of the displaced Palestinians outright but obviously he was not forthcoming on the principle in the closed session that followed.

In response to a question about Israel's position on the principle of the right of return, Mr. al-Kabariti told reporters after the meeting: "It is a right we will pursue," indicating that Israel was not yet committed.

Egypt's Musa stressed in his opening remarks that the meeting was not being held to discuss the principle of the right to return since it was already an established fact.

"We are not here to discuss the right of return for the displaced persons or even to agree on this principle. It is an established, existing right supported by international law and United Nations resolutions and Israel's agreement with the Arab countries," said Mr. Musa, referring to the 1979 Camp David accords with Egypt, the PLO-Israeli declaration of principles and the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

The Arab parties also urged a speedy solution to the problem while Israel emphasised on its version of a realistic approach and warned against creating new problems by solving the plight of the displaced.

"In practical terms, we must take care not to solve one problem by complicating existing problems or creating new ones," Mr. Peres asserted.

The Israeli approach to the meeting as an "informal consultation" clearly contrasted with the Arab quest to ensure that the meeting produced tangible progress.

The Arabs viewed the Amman meeting, the first under a 1993 Israeli-PLO peace accord, as a formal attempt at tackling the problem.

"We need to adopt a strategy of rehabilitation to bring about a solution that is mutually agreed upon, a solution just in character and realistic in implementation, and an agreed agenda on the scope of the problem," [said] Mr. Peres, citing the need for security and economic resources to absorb the refugees. He called on the international community to help meet the infrastructure need of returning Palestinians.

"We also have to deal with the regional dimension of dealing with the problem and agree on the measures needed to prevent disruption and disorder," said Mr. Peres.

Dr. Sha'th stressed the need for a quick solution to the problem to help a dead-locked peace process.

"We see the speeding up in implementation as an important step in supporting the peace process that is suffering from dangerous paralysis," said Dr. Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

That was a clear reference to the PLO's hopes that any immediate move towards repatriation of the displaced would shore up the sagging support for the autonomy deal.

"We look forward to finding a solution to speed the implementation of the Oslo agreement ... our success here would be a boost for attaining a real peace," said the PNA minister. "The return of the displaced is a right beginning to correct an historical mistake."

In his opening comments, Mr. al-Kabariti stressed that Jordan, which has shouldered a great financial burden due to the forced exodus of Palestinians, attached a great deal of importance to finding a solution to the plight of displaced persons, refugees and expellees.

"It is our beief that resolving such issues is an integral part and defining point in the peace process," said Mr. al-Kabariti. "Indeed, what gives us added motivation for finding a solution to this sensitive human tragedy is the fact that Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestinians in the diaspora, the overwhelming who carry Jordanian citizenship."

Calling for a just and honourable solution to end the "painful status quo," Mr. al-Kabariti said priority of the right to return should be given to displaced Palestinians who neither carry Jordanian nationality nor a temporary Jordanian passport.

Mr. al-Kabariti said that "economic and financial ramifications on the host country, and the scio-economic conditions of displaced persons in their dwellings and the effect of their neighbouring communities," should be considered when proposing a gradual solution.

Palestinian Affairs

Adviser on 'Arafat Schedule, Christopher Tour

NC0703214095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1915 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 7 Mar (MENA)—President 'Arafat's adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah has disclosed that the itinerary of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's trip scheduled for the next few days has been amended. He said it has been decided that the Palestinian president will visit Denmark on Saturday [11 March] instead of tomorrow and that he will visit Morocco for one day. He later added: 'Arafat will return to Gaza to meet Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres on Thursday and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Friday.

In statements to MENA's correspondent in Gaza, Abu-Rudaynah commented on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region. He said: We look forward to Christopher's visit and attach great importance to it because it comes at a time when the peace process has reached a deadlock. A more effective role is required.

He added that the peace process is at a real stalemate because of the Israeli Government's intransigent stands, the continuation of settlement-building, and the non-implementation of the accords with the Palestinian side.

He referred to President Clinton's recent message to President 'Arafat, the foreign ministers meeting in Washington, Christopher's tour of the region, and U.S. Vice President Al Gore's forthcoming visit. He said: This shows more vigor in promoting the peace process and we regard these as good efforts for a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

He added that contacts between the Palestinian Authority and Cairo are continuing within the framework of the consultations between President Husni Mubarak and President 'Arafat. He noted that President 'Arafat will meet President Mubarak in Cairo after Mubarak returns from his forthcoming trip to Japan. He said President 'Arafat will leave for Tunis in the second half of this month to chair the PLO Central Committee meetings there, which are a continuation of the committee's meeting recently held in Cairo.

'Active' U.S. Intervention Urged To Reinvigorate Talks

TA0703194895 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 11

[Editorial: "Christopher's Tour and the Current Deadlock in the Talks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of the tour that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is scheduled to begin on 8 March, the Arab-Israeli talks on the remaining tracks, especially the Palestinian and Syrian tracks, seem to be deadlocked. This is something that actually requires active and effective intervention by the United States, the major sponsor of the peace process, to reinvigorate and reactivate the talks which have reached such a state as a result of hardline Israeli positions on these two tracks.

The United States is not expected to pressure Israel to change or at least moderate its positions, because experience has proved that Washington is either unwilling or unable to play such an active role. However, the U.S. Administration is called upon to act in accordance with what the current situation in the peace process dictates—a situation that cannot be described as positive by any standard. In this case, one must act to restore the situation to its natural state and remove the obstacles or difficulties on its path. These obstacles and difficulties stem basically from the Israeli policy which pursues the method of delay and procrastination as well as disrespect for dates and timetables for which the Israeli side signed agreements.

On the Palestinian track, in particular, there is a demand based on what was agreed upon in Oslo, namely; implementation of the second stage of the Palestinian-Israeli interim agreement, in all its details, relating to the redeployment of Israeli forces outside Palestinian population centers in the West Bank as a prelude to the holding of Palestinian elections. Israel is continuing to drag its feet in carrying out these steps under the pretext of security reasons despite the fact that not only the deadline for doing so passed many weeks ago, but also the date set for holding the elections passed many months ago.

Hence, the United States should not suffice with the role of a broker in or a promoter of the peace process, because the nature of the current stage requires it to play a more active role if it is concerned about the perpetuation of the peace process and the realization of its defined goals. These goals are epitomized in the achievement of a just peace based on the Palestinian people's legitimate and inalienable rights, which have been stipulated by the resolutions of international legitimacy and which formed the basic reference point of the peace process. Moreover, these goals are supposed to form the firm basis for any move intended to invigorate this process, including the U.S. secretary of state's upcoming tour.

Al-Husayni Warns Against Closing Down Orient House

JN0703160395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem dossier at the National Authority, today told correspondents that any Israeli move to close down Orient House will mean the collapse of the entire peace process.

Al-Husayni added: Peace means peace with all states in the region and not with the Palestinians only.

Qaddumi Views Fatah Meetings, Peace Process

TA0703194695 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 7 Mar 95 pp 1, 10

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis—Faruq Qaddumi, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the PLO Political Department, has denied press reports on the convocation of the Fatah Central Committee session without the participation of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

Qaddumi, who is the Fatah Central Committee secretary, explained that there is no basis to reports that the Fatah Central Committee meetings have begun without the president's knowledge, or that these meetings seek to make leadership changes in Fatah. He stressed that the current meetings are periodical meetings in which crucial issues and problems that arise now and then will be discussed.

Qaddumi added that the Fatah Central Committee meetings, which began Sunday evening, were convened with the consent of President 'Arafat. This consent was obtained at a three-hour meeting with the president during his recent visit to Tunis.

Qaddumi added that the Fatah Central Committee meetings will continue during the coming few days in a preparatory and consultative fashion to discuss the prevailing political situation in view of the fact that talks on the Palestinian-Israeli track have reached a dead end due to Israeli intransigence and Yitzhaq Rabin's refusal to implement the Declaration of Principles [DOP].

Qaddumi noted that the consultative and preparatory feature of these meetings is due to a lack of quorum, which calls for the presence of 12 members. The delay in the arrival of some Central Committee members is due to prior engagements which have prevented them from coming to Tunis.

The Palestinian official emphasized that after a quorum is reached, the Central Committee will adopt official and crucial decisions. Qaddumi expected President 'Arafat to come to Tunis very soon to finalize the issues on the agenda, including the internal situation in Fatah.

Qaddumi explained: "After the conclusion of the Central Committee meetings, we will hold another PLO Executive Committee meeting which will be well prepared by securing the invitation, presence, and participation of the representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Arab Liberation Front, and the People's Party." He noted that apart from the need of reaching a quorum of 12 members that allows the holding of an official meeting, the presence of these representatives is very important for the adoption of crucial decisions. He pointed out that the recent PLO Executive Committee meeting in Cairo lacked a quorum.

Qaddumi implicitly supported Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] call for participation in a comprehensive national dialogue after the PLO leadership's and the National Authority's acknowledgement that the Palestinian-Israeli agreements had reached a dead end. He said that contacts with all Palestinian national forces will continue in order to draw up a national action program, agreed on by everyone, to confront the political challenges. He stressed Fatah's eagerness to maintain a relationship with Hamas.

Supporting the Call to Suspend Talks With Israel

In this context, Qaddumi expressed his support for the call by Mahmud 'Abbas, member of the PLO Executive Committee, to suspend the talks with Israel. He considered this essential for facilitating the presence of those who opposed the Oslo accords or had observations on the course of the negotiations.

Crucial Decisions

The head of the PLO Political Department noted that the adoption of crucial decisions has become an urgent necessity because of the Israeli position, which has brought the peace process to a dead end in view of Yitzhaq Rabin's refusal to implement the DOP and release Palestinian prisoners. He has also continued the establishment of settlements, the confiscation of land, and the isolation of Jerusalem. In addition, he has not carried out the Israeli army's redeployment in the West Bank as a prerequisite for the holding of general legislative elections. This confirms that the peace process is being threatened with destruction.

Arab Coordination

On relations with the Arab parties participating in the peace process, Qaddumi said: "We have been and are eager on establishing joint Arab action and coordination between the Arab parties involved in the peace process. This means the continuation of our contacts and coordination with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon aimed at consolidating the pan-Arab front to confront the hardline Israeli policy.

Abu-al-Za'im and Fatah

In answer to a question about the reported imminent return of 'Atallah 'Atallah, alias Abu-al-Za'im, to the National Authority's areas to assume an official post, Qaddumi said: "Abu-al-Za'im split from Fatah and the Fatah leadership issued a decision dismissing him. Therefore, another decision by the same leadership is required for his return, because his action violated Fatah teachings, approach, and values."

PA Seeks Return of Displaced 'of Financial Means'

TA0803061095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Palestinians say they would be able to absorb a million displaced people within five years. The director of the Palestinian Authority's [PA] Economic Ministry, Samir Hulaylah, said that the Authority would propose starting to bring back 100,000 displaced Palestinians. These would be people of financial means—all those who own a home or land in the West Bank—so that they would be able to take care of themselves and help create a positive economic environment. [passage omitted]

Algeria

Sifi Views Reasons for Country's Civil War

MS0803103295 London THE INDEPENDENT in English 8 Mar 95 p 12

[Report on interview with Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi by Robert Fisk in Algiers; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mokdad Sifi's parents were illiterate, his father a mason from Tebessa, eastern Algeria. Mr Sifi himself is an engineer trained in Paris but he looks like a prize-fighter, a chain-smoker who takes no nonsense from Western journalists if he thinks he is being insulted.

Ask if the government did not fail to respect the constitution when it cancelled the 1991 elections, which the Islamic Salvation Front would have won, and his voice rises. "I am the Prime Minister of Algeria and I have to be treated with dignity," he says. "You are acting like AFP (the French news agency)." For a moment, I thought Mr Sifi was going to show us the door.

But when I pointed out that he had a museum-piece submachine-gun mounted in a case on the wall and that he was the first prime minister I had interviewed who had an automatic weapon in his office, Mr Sifi broke into a satisfied grin. "It isn't mine—it's from the 1954-62 war." And he relaxed, apparently convinced we were not, after all, the ghosts of Algeria's old French colonial masters. "You gave me the impression that you were blaming me for what was done up to 1990," he said, "that you blamed me for things I myself disagreed with. I am running a government of technocrats. I am an engineer with a mission."

He had had a hard day. Hours before, the ministers of justice and communication had been fired for their role in the aftermath of the prison slaughter at Sekardji last month. And that morning the Algerian director of the UN Development Project had been shot dead as he left home. You could understand why the security guards downstairs put you through the metal-detector before leading you through the old French administrative building in which, in a room of wood panelling and satin curtains, Mr Sifi had to endure our questions. He knew how to deflect them.

Ask him how he could justify the government's rejection of the "Rome platform", last month's peace proposals by political parties—including the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)—and he answers: "I would prefer that you say 'explain' rather than 'justify'. What is this 'platform' other than what the President (Liamine Zeroual) has been asking for since January of 1994? Dialogue, co-operation, respect for the constitution, with everything that means. But on the Rome 'platform', terrorism was not condemned. It is those who claim responsibility for attacks who signed this agreement. Before going to Rome, Mr Mehri (of the FLN [National Liberation Front], the former ruling party) was able to see Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj (FIS leaders under house arrest). What did you expect us to do?"

True, the old buzz-word "terrorism" was not mentioned in Rome but all sides renounced "violence", which—in the context of the Algerian tragedy—means much the same thing. It was not, however, enough to satisfy Mr Sifi. Ask him whom he blames for the violence and the answer comes at once, at length in detail. In the Seventies, Algeria lived beyond its means, acquiring a long-term debt while living under a dictatorship in which ordinary citizens had to ask permission to holiday abroad. When oil prices rose to $40 a barrel, Algeria stopped investing, invented the slogan "For a better life" and began a big programme of foreign imports. When oil fell to $7 a barrel in 1985, Algeria tried to maintain its standard of living, exhausted its currency reserves and negotiated short-term loans which eventually provoked what Mr Sifi called the "semolina demonstrations"—food riots of 1988.

"The government then said that instead of facing this social crisis, it would open the door to democracy. We let everybody create a political party. Fifteen people could create a party. Some families created political parties so they could get a 2m-dinar grant from the government... in the end, we had 73 political parties."

The familiar argument is that Chadli Bendjedid, the president who allowed the FIS to break the constitution by forming a party based on religion, is ultimately to blame for the present bloodbath. "People lost confidence in everything that had to do with the state, especially the FLN. The municipal elections were totally won by the FIS. It was a protest vote. A 16-year-old always quarrels with his parents—and the Algerian population is young."

Mr Sifi recalled how the FIS turned municipalities into "Islamic centres", how cinemas were closed, couples forbidden in some areas to walk together how "bars were sacked" and then went on to denounce alleged fraud at the parliamentary elections, recalling massive demonstrations after the elections by citizens demanding annulment of the poll.

Those of us who were here at the time saw no such demonstrations and would surely have been advised of them by the authorities if they took place.

And then we came to the presidential elections called by President Zeroual for later this year, elections which many Algerians believe will never take place. The President, Mr Sifi insisted, was to be trusted. Why in his capacity of Minister of Defence, General Zeroual had travelled to Blida prison to talk to Mr Madani and Mr Belhadj, the FIS leaders, one of who had rewarded him by writing to a FIS "terrorist" in September of last year. "Dialogue remained on the periphery," he said. "It went in circles."

So could the FIS participate in presidential elections, always supposing they took place? Mr Sifi's answer was elliptical, perhaps deliberately so, but intriguing none the less. "If by the FIS you mean the structure of the party that was dissolved by law—and whose dissolution was upheld by the Supreme Court—the answer is 'no'. But the FIS is made up of men and most of the original members have rejected the FIS. And every Algerian must be permitted to participate in the elections although not, of course, as a representative of a political party. And you can't put a terrorist forward to be a candidate. He must denounce terrorism to be a candidate." One could not forget another "terrorist" who renounced "terrorism"—a once regular visitor to Algeria called Yasir 'Arafat and wonder if there was not an infinitesimally tiny hole opening here in the wall of Algerian government implacability. Perhaps. But then Mr Sifi also explained that "between saying you want a democracy and actually creating a democracy, there is a big difference". Algeria's new and positive relationship with the IMF, its financial improvement, he said, "implies a kind of democracy". I suppose the Chinese would say the same.

Zeroual Urges Women To Redirect 'Deviated' Sons

LD0803100995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1854 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Speech by President Liamine Zeroual to women's movement delegation on 7 March; place not given—recorded]

[[FBIS Translated Excerpt] I am very happy to meet you on the eve of International Woman's Day. [passage omitted]

In the face of all the difficulties and challenges, and particularly in the face of the blind terrorism which is characterized by a savagery not known to mankind in the present era, the Algerian woman continues to adhere to her pure national spirit. I take this occasion to pay homage once again to the souls of all our daughters and sisters who have fallen victim to the cowardly assassinations by murderers who have no connection with our true religion. On behalf of the nation, I express our solidarity with all our sisters who have been deprived by those traitors of a member of their family. [passage omitted]

The Algerian woman is considered, through her safeguarding the national values and the education she gives to future generations, the best guarantee for our society against all the social scourges and all forms of extremism. Every Algerian woman must develop in our children's minds our pure traditions represented particularly by honor, love for the homeland, and showing the true teachings of our true religion.

At the same time, I call on all Algerian women to urge all our sons who have deviated from the straight and narrow for reasons of despair or criminal designs of some people, to recover their maturity for their benefit and that of the society as a whole. [passage omitted]

New Communications, Justice Ministers Appointed

LD0703183395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Liamine Zeroual today appointed Liamine Bechichi as communication minister and Mohamed Adami as justice minister.

Liamine Bechichi, born in 1927, is married and has five children. He has obtained many university degrees in literature and law. Prior to his appointment as minister of communication, he was director general of the National Radio Enterprise.

Mohamed Adami, born in 1950, is married and has six children. He has occupied many judicial positions, including the position of prosecutor general, judge, and a counsellor at the Supreme Court.

Liamine Zeroual today also appointed Amar Zegrar as secretary general of the presidency.

Egypt

Musa, PA's Sha'th Discuss Meeting on Displaced

NC0803080095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo from Amman tonight after leading the Egyptian delegation to the meeting of the Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli foreign ministers. The meeting discussed the displaced Palestinians.

On his return, 'Amr Musa stated that it is important to start to discuss this issue, which had been postponed, adding: It opens the way to a discussion of the refugees issue within the multilateral negotiations so that we can reach agreements based on international law, UN Security Council resolutions, and bilateral agreements.

The foreign minister noted that today's meeting produced no objective results. He said he hopes that future meetings will produce positive results although the issue is not a simple one.

Musa reported that disputes continue and the Amman meeting failed to fulfill the Arab demands. He explained that there are many points of disagreement and adequate efforts are necessary to overcome them.

The foreign minister said the displaced Palestinians' proposed return to their homes is part of rearranging the conditions in the West Bank and Gaza.

As for Palestinian fears that the Amman meeting could fail to achieve positive results, 'Amr Musa said these fears are justified. He pointed out that the U.S. discussions to begin after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives in Cairo tomorrow will focus on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track and the problems it is facing, in addition to the lack of progress on the Syrian track. He said the discussions with Christopher will also deal with Israel's nuclear program.

The foreign minister said he will submit a comprehensive report to President Husni Mubarak on the results of the Amman meeting and his personal meetings with the heads of the delegations.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian Authority [PA] minister of international cooperation and head of the Palestinian delegation, announced that the Amman meeting failed to achieve the results for which the Arab negotiators had been hoping. He remarked: This is what we have been expecting, because the Israelis procrastinate on every issue.

Sha'th said the meeting served to highlight the principle approved by the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, calling for a committee to be formed to discuss the measures that should govern the return of Palestinians who left their homes in 1967. He noted that the Israelis have procrastinated over forming this committee for 14 months.

Sha'th warned that there will be no peace unless the displaced Palestinians' problem is solved.

He concluded his statement by expressing the hope that the U.S. secretary of state's regional tour will help to induce progress on the Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks.

The meeting of the Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli, and PA foreign ministers on the status of the displaced Palestinians and their right to return ended in the Jordanian capital tonight. A notable point mentioned in its final statement was a resolution to form a committee that will have three members from each delegation to meet on the level of ministers or experts to discuss the displaced. This committee will meet one month from today. After the initial meeting it will convene every three weeks.

The four parties will hold a ministerial meeting every two or three months. The meetings of experts will submit reports on the talks to the ministerial meeting.

Christopher Arrives on First Leg of Mideast Tour

NC0803104795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Cairo this afternoon on a visit to Egypt at the start of a new tour of the Middle East region.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa was at the airport to receive the U.S. secretary.

The objective of Christopher's tour is to activate the peace process in the region.

Commentary: 'High Hopes' for Tour

NC0703152295 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Commentary by Samir 'Abd-al-Tawwab: "The Results Expected From Christopher's Trip to the Region"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] All circles in the region and in the world are awaiting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour, which he will begin in Cairo tomorrow. This time Christopher's tour is open to a considerable number of questions and probabilities. Answering these questions will depend on two basic elements. The first is what the U.S. secretary is carrying in proposals and ideas and the second is to what extent the parties concerned, particularly the Israeli side, will respond to the proposed solutions. A third and equally important element relates to the ideas and notions that all parties will come up with and that Christopher will carry back and forth among all parties during his tour.

All politicians and observers in the region and abroad, whether optimists, pessimists, or in between, have made an assessment of the situation in an attempt to come up with a formula for the next steps in the Middle East peace process. Perhaps the most important and significant comment made in the past few hours before Christopher's tour was Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's full rejection of Israel's notion of putting Syria in a trial period in exchange for a limited withdrawal from the Golan. The Egyptian foreign minister totally rejected this notion, which he described as unacceptable. He added: If needs be, then all parties must be put to a test. He hoped that Christopher's tour will lead to a breakthrough on the Palestinian-Israeli track and put the peace process on course.

If Israel's demand or idea is unacceptable because it is unreasonable, reports coming from Washington on the eve of Christopher's departure for the region are positive. A White House spokesman has stressed that there is no change in the U.S. Administration's position on Jerusalem. The United States believes that the best way to handle this matter is to discuss it as part of the Declaration of Principles. It is worth noting that eight U.S. Christian leaders have called on President Clinton to place Jerusalem at the forefront of his priorities and to put pressure on Israel to stop annexing more land from the holy city. [passage omitted]

At any rate, the picture now looks clear. The optimum formula for a solution is no longer questionable, except for some hardliners in Israel. In the eyes of everybody except for Israel, Jerusalem is not negotiable. Even the United States emphasizes that there is no change in its stance vis-a-vis this holy city. Syria is committed to peace; all peace for all territory. There is no better formula than that which Israel has sought to achieve for so long. Now that this formula is in sight, Israel is playing its game of procrastination and is arrogantly calling for subjecting Syria to a trial period, while in fact Syria is the one that deservedly should put Israel under a trial period. For Israel is the aggressor and the one that has been occupying the territory for more than 25 years, while Syria is the party subject to the aggression. According to law and justice, Syria has the right to try Israel for a certain number of years. This is particularly so since Israel is showing considerable ill will regarding the elimination of the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons from the region; procrastinating in implementing the Israeli-Palestinian agreement related to broadening the self-rule authority, withdrawing from the West Bank, holding legislative elections, and releasing detainees; and failing to agree to the return of the Palestinians displaced since 1967.

A Palestinian official has warned Israel that its policy of procrastination in all aspects of the peace process could further complicate the crisis facing the peace negotiations. Despite all this, there are high hopes about the U.S. secretary of state's tour and ideas and how Israel will respond to the spirit of peace, which must prevail in the entire Middle East.

Libya's al-Bishari Delivers Message From al-Qadhdhafi

NC0803091795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0832 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—This morning, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received an oral message from Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution.

The message was delivered by Ibrahim al-Bishari, the general coordinator of Egyptian-Libyan relations and the Libyan Jamahiriyah's permanent representative to the Arab League, when President Mubarak received him at the presidential headquarters.

Ibrahim al-Bishari stated after the meeting that the message addressed bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

He said that President Mubarak handed over a written message to Col. al-Qadhdhafi in answer to his message within the framework of the distinguished fraternal relations between the two leaders, Mubarak and al-Qadhdhafi.

Al-Bishari added that the Lockerbie case is at the top of President Mubarak's agenda. He affirmed that Libya still adheres to the decision of the Arab League Council, which is to hold a fair trial of the suspects based on Scottish law.

Al-Bishari said that regarding the emergence of new evidence pointing to the innocence of Libya in the Lockerbie case, al-Bishari said they will discuss this matter in the next Arab League Council meeting on 21 March.

He noted that a memorandum has been prepared on this matter which will be presented to the Arab League secretary general.

He added that despite this new evidence, Libya will agree to the trial because the trial will reveal facts clearly.

Al-Bishari clarified that the next Security Council meeting to discuss developments in the Lockerbie crisis will be held in April.

Prime Minister Sidqi Details Development Plan

NC0403224095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Mar (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has said investments in the current fiscal year's plan amount to approximately 35 billion pounds, including 12.8 billion for the government and economic agencies, 4 billion for the public business sector, and about 18.2 billion for the private sector—that is, 52 percent of total investment. This, he added, represents approximately 21 percent of the gross national product estimates according to market price.

In an exclusive statement to AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, Sunday [5 March], he says the plan aims to boost overall local production from 139.1 to 145.4 billion pounds, with an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent compared to last year. This, he added, is in addition to continuing raising living standards by increasing the consumption rate and reducing the population growth rate. He noted that the plan aims to create new job opportunities for some half million workers.

Sidqi said the balance of payments, which was continuously in the red until 1989-90, achieved a surplus of $2.8 billion last year. He noted that this surplus is attributed to increased remittances from Egyptian expatriates, which doubled during the last four years from $3.1 to $6.2 billion. He noted that the Suez Canal revenues also increased by about $2 billion as compared to $1.7 billion during the same period. Sidqi pointed out that the economic reform program's success created a foreign currency reserve of $17.5 billion for the Central Bank. [passage omitted]

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Interview Reaffirms Stance on Issues

No Investment, Arms From West

LD0703180295 Tripoli JANA in English 1706 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Marrikh [March] 7, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution has confirmed that Libya will not invest its money in the Western states again and will not purchase any factories, aircrafts or ships from the West as long as these countries are applying sanctions for political reasons. We will stop buying any spare-parts. We will not buy any weapons. Even the weapons which we bought from them they haven't supplied spare-parts for it. The weapons which we sent for maintenance are seized by them. This alerts us that we cannot deal with them in the future and we will convince the world to abandon the West and go for China and India.

The leader of the revolution revealed in the interview conducted with him by the London published newspaper

AL-'ARAB that Libya will take the case and will spread it to the level of the whole world and will exert every effort to demonstrate the dangers arising from applying economic sanctions on the states for political reasons. It will show that the world has turned into an unsafe and insecure place as long as the sanctions became the norm.

He said that we will open our markets for the products of China and India. We will bring workers from there and we will invest our money with them.

In respect of the dispute between China and America the leader of the revolution said that China said the world is open in front of me to buy and sell any goods.

The leader of the revolution revealed that the issue connected to this case is the issue of Lockerbie and the new facts which emerged and acknowledged by the English foreign minister in their Parliament. This case is legal. It is not political in any way. As long as it is a case that should be treated by the judiciary and investigators and had nothing with politics...why was it raised to the Security Council. If the case is so then England had to come up and say that the case is a legal case that has to be considered in courts and has to be withdrawn from the Security Council.

The leader of the revolution asked: Does the English foreign minister want to laugh at the English House of Commons or is he laughing at the world, or at himslelf or at whom is he laughing. Therefore he is laughing at the English House of Commons. He considers its members as children and fools. This is something which concrns him. He is laughing at his people and fooling them and fooling the public opinion but he cannot fool us. If the issue is legal and judiciary, let it be withdrawn from the Security Council. And now it is political. As long as it is a case pending investigations why do they rule out the new evidence.

The leader said: I believe that the lawyers of the accused will stick to these points from the legal aspects. No evidence should be ruled out. The case requires therefore that Libya should not be placed in the accusation dock as new evidence has emerged to demonstrate that Libya is certainly not the accused. This requires the freezing of all resolutions issued against Libya by the so- called Security Council.

He revealed that the Western states have pre-intentions to penalise Libya for other reasons and not for the reasons of Lockerbie because they don't have the will to go in this road. They do not have the intention to re-open the investigations. They do not want to consider the new evidence because to consider the new evidence and to re-open the investigation, that would not allow the continuation of sanctions against Libya.

The leader said that these sanctions must be freezed and suspended until the whole facts are established. It is clear that the British and the American Governments have concealed many things form the public opinion, the investigators and the people, including the document which the English foreign minister said we are not aware of it. They shall tell him if you are not aware of it why did you not tell us about it and why is it concealed until it is published by the American intelligence. What is obvious is that there is an agreement to stick to Libya's accusation even if it was innocent.

The leader said: The Libyan people have paid the price of this case even before the trial and before the condemnation and there is nothing more to lose and Libya should not surrender the two suspects and pay the price at the same time. It should either pay the price or surrender the supects or pay the price and abstain from surrendering its sons. But to pay the price and to surrender its sons then this is impossible and they have to understand this which was probably not clear.

NPT Renewal Refused Unless Israel Signs

LD0703231795 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1850 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 7 Mar (JANA)—Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the brother leader of the revolution, has said that Libya will refuse to renew signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty so long as the Israelis have not signed it.

The brother leader says: We were nice in the past when we signed the treaty, since the advent of the revolution, but we realized afterwards that the Israelis were manufacturing atomic bombs and have managed so far to produce over 200 nuclear heads, which have been declared and which are a known fact, and yet nobody talks about them.

In a recent interview with AL-'ARAB, the brother leader points out that even after we signed the treaty, the Israelis are holding a sword over our heads, and every day America is saying that Libya could manufacture the atomic bomb and could become a nuclear power.... He also indicates that we are inspected every six months and you see for yourselves whether we possess atomic or nuclear weapons or not. He adds that it is unjust and unfair that America harasses those who do not possess nuclear weapons while it ignores the Israelis.

The brother leader says that the states which have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are continuously inspected by the Atomic Energy Agency, and these states keep their doors open to inspection because they have signed this treaty. We have signed this treaty and we are inspected by the Atomic Energy Agency, and despite all this America terrorizes us and threatens us every day.

The brother leader also wonders if there was any point in signing this treaty. He says: We now refuse to sign its renewal until the Israelis are inspected and disarmed, because inspection is not sufficient. Israel must be deprived of the atomic bombs it possesses, and also of the biological and chemical weapons it has stockpiled, which are enough to destroy the whole of the Arab homeland. Otherwise, the Arabs will be entitled to manufacture atomic, biological, and chemical weapons, and if they [not further specified] want to deprive the Arabs of these weapons, why do they not disarm the Arabs' adversaries, the Israelis, in the same way?

The brother leader of the revolution stresses that the Egyptian stance of refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if the enemy does not sign it is the right stance.

In the interview to the newspaper Al-'ARAB, the brother leader says that Egypt's stance is the right one, but regrettably we find that America's whole policy is based on pressure on the Arabs so they they submit to the Israelis. America practises all pressures and tries to humiliate Egypt.

The leader adds that the United States blackmails Egypt with its daily bread so that it submits to Israel, and so that Israel does not sign and Egypt does. He stresses that the American policy has now been exposed and America puts pressures on Arabs and uses all its means to force the Arabs to submit to the Israelis so that Israel is, as America wants, the great state in the Middle East, and Arabs become its protectorates terrorized by its nuclear, chemical, bacteriological, and mass destruction weapons. He stresses that this is America's policy, and consequently they do not talk about the 200 nuclear heads in Israel. Instead, they talk about the al-Rabitah pharmaceutical plant.

The brother leader of the revolution adds: Israel has atom bombs and America does not talk about them. However, when Libya had a pharmaceutical factory, America terrorized us, moved its fleets and, made us live in terror. He points out that, in spite of the fact that we have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, America accuses us perhaps of manufacturing nuclear weapons. Have we not signed the treaty and do you not inspect?

In the interview the brother leader emphasizes that neither America nor the UN Security Council can take away the mass destruction weapons from Israel. He says that it is impossible to take away the mass destruction weapons from Israel, and that neither America nor the UN Security Council can take away the mass destruction weapons from Israel, that that is impossible.

He stresses that Libya will not sign in the coming months the renewal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

He adds: The Arabs should not hope that America will take away the mass destruction weapons from Israel as this is impossible, because the Israelis will keep the mass destruction weapons in order to subjugate the Arabs, enslave them, and take their water and oil, and they will continue until they take Mecca and not just Jerusalem.

Smaller Nations 'Fooled' Into UN

LD0703194695 Tripoli JANA in English 1918 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, Al-Marrikh [March] 7, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution has confirmed in his interview with the London based newspaper AL-'ARAB that the so-called United Nations historical origin is formed by America, Britain, France and Russia which united against Hitler and against Germany in the Second World War.

He said that when America entered the war against Germany it was given another name which is the United Nations and not the United Nations allied against Germany. When they were close to victory at the end of the war Roosevelt told them let us develop the name to make it the United Nations Organizations to make it international not limited to Russia, America, Britain and France.

The leader revealed that, we, the small nations have been fooled when we accepted their call to join the United Nations because they said we will protect you and we will end the use of force and we will end oppression and tryanny and the smaller nations will be protected from the powerful nations but now it became obvious that the United Nations was a farce because it had been transformed into a brandished sword hanging over our heads. We are being slaughtred in the name of the United Naitons. The people of Iraq and the smaller nations are massacred by the United Nations.

The leader, said: On the 50th anniversary for the establishment of this farce we will undertake to expose the facts. We will convince ourselves and the other nations of the need to stop the farce as it has become a brandished sword. Why should we consider it international. It is only an organization.

He added that we will deny its legitimacy and we will attack it and we will go back to square one. Because on this occasion we want to expose the deception, we want to show that we have been fooled. if it wasn't for us the United Nations would not have been established. It would have remained 4 countries only America, Britain, France and Russia united against Germany. We have given life to it. We gave it the international dimension. It became an international organization. It became the United Nations through the presence of the fooled smaller nations. Now we have discovered the fact. We have been deceived and now it is destroying us. It is slaughtering us. And it is blockading us. And now it is demanding us to surrender our sons to offer them as human offerings for the larger states.

The leader added that after 50 years of this bitter, hard and failed experiments we could not accept the situation of the Security Council as it is now and we could not accept the United Nations as it is now.

Morocco

*Paris Weekly Examines Marzoug Hamel Case

95AF0042A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 18 Jan 95 pp 12-17

[Article by Francois Soudan: "The Making of a Terrorist"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Morocco—From the Barbes quarter of Paris to the prison at Fes, this is the story of Marzoug Hamel, a lost child of fundamentalism who tried to destabilize the kingdom....

In a cell in the civilian prison of Ain Kadous, in Fes, a young man of 28 reads the Koran in French and meditates on the nightmare that has brought him here. A few yards away, in other damp cells, his confederates Redouane, Stephane, Abderrahmane, and Kamel are like him anxiously awaiting their trial. Some of them, still convinced they are on the front lines of the jihad, want to die. Others, like him, dream of getting out. All are counting the days between now and 10 January, when as members of the terrorist gang that machine-gunned the lobby of the Hotel Atlas-Asni in Marrakech on 24 August 1994, killing two Spanish tourists, they must appear in the criminal chamber of the Court of Appeal of Fes to answer the charges against them. Though the hastily organized trial might yet be postponed for several weeks, most of the defendants know they may receive the death sentence. Their only "compensation" is the fact that they will soon be the "heroes" of the upcoming SAS [expansion not given] of Gerard de Villiers, "Tuerie a Marrakech" [Massacre in Marrakech], scheduled for publication on 19 January.

But Marzoug Hamel did not shoot anyone. He undoubtedly intended to, but his mind and his trigger finger were paralyzed, at the last instant, by the horror of what he was about to do. Thus unlike Redouane Hammadi and Stephane Ait Idir, Marzoug did not actually commit murder. Four terrorist bands were at large in Morocco Last August, and he belonged to the Casablanca team, whose objective was doubtless the most terrible, the most symbolic, the grimmest of all: to kill Jews. Given away by his friends, abandoned by his covert patrons, gone to ground in Casablanca, he was the last to be captured, on 7 September. When the police knocked on his door, he offered no resistance. Long since had he come to see his "holy war" as no more than a glorified but tawdry series of stick-up jobs.

Marzoug was born on 18 November 1966 in Oran, Algeria. His parents were Cheikh Benmadjour, now deceased, and Kheira, who for her second husband would marry an Algerian from Meknes. The family, which lived quite modestly, emigrated to France in 1974. Thus Marzoug, who had gone to elementary school in Oran, attended high school in Paris's 19th arrondissement, not far from Barbes. He never graduated from fourth form, and followed the well-worn path of school-dropouts: vocational training, CAP [occupational certificate], unemployment, odd jobs. Life was hard in Rue Paloncea. His mother kept house, and his stepfather, a masseur who worked in a Turkish bathhouse, barely made enough to live on. Little by little, he and his wife lost all control over Marzoug and his four half-brothers and sisters.

In Barbes, the road to perdition—drugs and crime—is all too easy to find. So his parents were quite pleased to see him headed in the opposite direction, toward a life of piety. One day on Rue Poulet, in 1987—he was 21 years old at the time—the young Franco-Algerian met a man by the name of Nasser, not far from the famous mosque on Rue Myrha where the Islamist shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui officiates. Nasser, a Moroccan whose real name was Abdelkrim Afkir and who was later the author of the "fatwa" that authorized the Marrakech operation, was a veteran of the Afghanistan war, a part-time vendor of condiments at the Saint-Denis market. The smooth-talking Nasser spoke of God, Islam, the impious emigres whose only concern was filling their own pockets, and the great Islamic republic that someday would purify all of the Maghreb. Nasser quickly introduced his new recruit to two other "emirs" in what he called "the organization." These were Rachid (alias Bachir Abdelmalek, alias Abdelilah Ziyad, alias Mohamed Lahcene) and Said, whose real name was Mohamed Zine Eddine.

These three men, all Moroccans permanently established in France, serious students of the Koran, and political activists, were well known to Moroccan police, French security services, and probably Algerian Military Security [SM] as well. In the mid-1980s, they maintained close contacts with Abdelkrim Mottie's Moroccan Islamic Youth Movement (MJIM). As a result, they were given military training in the Polisario Front camps near Tindouf, according to testimony given by the Front's former security chief, Omar Hadrami, who later went over to the Moroccan side... All three [amirs] today are fugitives, but their mysterious "organization" is key to the whole affair. Is it, then, a creature of Algeria's SM, as the Moroccans suggest, or perhaps a mercenary group hired by FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] or GIA [Armed Islamic Groups], as examining magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere believes? One thing is sure: If ever there were contacts between the three emirs and the Iranian clandestine services, they never led to anything, since the precondition laid down by Tehran's representatives—that the entire group must convert to Shiism—was deemed unacceptable.

Marzoug made friends with a couple of boys from La Courneuve, Redouane Hammadi and Stephane Ait Idir, two of the young drifters he had met through Nasser and Rachid. Redouane was unemployed, while Stephane was a member of the "Muslim" gang that got into frequent brawls at the bottom of the stairwell in Housing Complex 4000, the so-called "druggie" complex. As for Marzoug, he was earning the minimum wage. These three "excludees" were searching for an identity, a goal to inspire them. The organization gave them just what they needed. Marzoug and his buddies got into sports: walking, boxing, and above all martial arts, that indispensable viaticum for apprentice Islamists. Karate, jeet kundo, kemyo [words as transliterated], all of it. During summer vacation, the group would meet in a house in Ardeche rented by Nasser from a retired couple to spend time in intensive training consisting of hiking, reading of the Koran, and target practice.

In early 1989, Marzoug took the big step. Accompanied by Rachid and Nasser, he left France for Pakistan. Nasser paid for the tickets. The oft-traveled itinerary is always the same: Turkish Airlines to Istanbul, then Pakistan International Airlines to Islamabad. From there, a minibus took them to a camp about 30 km from Peshawar, on the Afghan border. The young recruits took several weeks of crash courses taught by Afghan and Sudanese instructors, who put them through simulated attacks and taught them such skills as how to throw grenades or crawl on their bellies over difficult terrain with bullets whizzing over their heads...not exactly the kind of Boy Scout training one gets at Mont Gerbier-de-Jonc. By the time he returned to Paris, Marzoug was tough, ready for action. A short time later, Redouane and Stephane would go the same route, a path obviously well known to the French security services, though the latter allow it to function. Anyone who has doubts on this score need only consider the fact that, while training in Peshawar, Stephane Ait Idir mislaid his passport. Just like anyone else, he presented himself at the French Embassy in Islamabad to fill out a declaration of loss and receive in exchange, after a routine file check, a safe-conduct pass to return to Paris...

Marzoug Hamel then took himself for a soldier of God. At home, his behavior changed radically. He kept to himself, pored over a French edition of the Koran containing a list of mandatory observances, and wrote up his scarcely orthodox notes. They were index cards, actually, and rather abbreviated ones at that (though he was very proud of them), with information on high-level personnel in General Investigations [investigative branch of police security] and DST [Directorate of Territorial Security], sabotage procedures, and "tailing" techniques. He often had arguments with his brother, who despaired for him: Seven years younger, Bachir smoked and was not one to refuse a drink or the companionship of a young Jewish girl. Three capital sins. To refortify his commitment, Marzoug went regularly to see Nasser, Rachid, Said, and their new comrade, Mourad, alias el-Mahdi, alias Abdellatif el-Idrissi, who was Moroccan-born in a village near Marrakech and then living in Poitiers. These men were all a decade or more older than Marzoug. They were his big brothers, and he sat religiously at their feet while they drummed into him, ever more insistently, the message that the jihad for him was in Morocco.

In August 1992 Nasser and Rachid sent Marzoug on his first mission: to deliver, via Spain and northern Morocco, a consignment of arms destined for the [Islamist] brethren in Algeria. The trail, they told him, was much used and completely safe, thanks to an efficient network of local accomplices. He was entrusted with a diesel-fueled Mercedes 280 bearing Paris license plates—the classic "emigre" car—whose sides contained hidden compartments stuffed with Uzi and Scorpio automatic pistols, ammunition, and walkie-talkies. Nasser gave him 5,000 francs [Fr] in cash and a false French passport in the name of Aziz Aid. Marzoug then joined the flood of Moroccan residents abroad returning to their homeland for their summer [i.e., August] vacation. He met with no problems crossing France and Spain or entering Morocco late at night through Tangier. Per instructions, Marzoug then headed south, cutting across the Gharb and stopping at Sidi Kacem. He parked the Mercedes, went to the main post office, and dialed the number of Rachid's portable telephone in Paris. Rachid, who took his Itineris [cordless phone] with him everywhere, answered and waited for the password, which he varied from time to time depending on his mood, though it was always the name of a movie theater. "Cinema Atlas," said Marzoug (another time it would be "Cinema Scheherazade"); "Yes?" Rachid answered; "I've arrived," Marzoug continued; "Stay where you are, in front of the post office, you'll be contacted." Two hours later, a man about 30 years old approached and shook his hand: "I'm Mouloud, we're going to Oujda."

It was nighttime when the Mercedes arrived in the capital of Oriental province, a stone's throw from the Algerian border. Mouloud directed Marzoug to a garage adjacent a two-story house. Two men opened the corrugated metal door: One's name was Omar, also known as Djamal Hamaz, while the other, who wore a beard, was called Bachir. "Leave the vehicle with us, go to the hotel, and await our instructions," said Omar. Marzoug took a room in Hotel Khaled and killed time there for a week. Then a certain "Abdelkader" came to him returning the Mercedes, now evidently divested of its secret cargo: "I'm going back with you to Paris." Along the way, Marzoug tried to "debrief" his comrade, but the latter was extremely taciturn. All he learned was that "Abdelkader" was an Algerian, that he lived on Rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud, close to Belleville, and that he was a "mujahidin" with the AIS [Islamic Army of Salvation], the armed branch of the FIS.

Rachid and Nasser were pleased. As for Marzoug, he quickly acclimated himself to his new life. Because in the eyes of this young man—described by his attorney, Arnaud de Montebourg, as "fragile"—Islamism had totally replaced that other family, the one that had never let him grow up. His circle of "kinfolk" expanded. He began to hang out with the "Orleans group," at the sports club in the Argonne quarter, with the likes of former parachutist Kamal Benakcha, unemployed "beur" [second-generation Maghreb emigre] Tarek Felha, electrician Abderrazak Mountassir: all Frenchmen of Moroccan extraction. These meetings showed, despite Rachid's "cinema" passwords, that the mysterious organization was not all that compartmentalized or secretive. It was amateurish, cobbled together: People disregarded their pseudonyms and used their real names. "It was fundamentalism 'made in France,'" Montebourg observed. This would explain the ease with which French and Moroccan police brought it down. It also meant that the latter, and other clandestine services as well, had probably penetrated it a long time ago.

To test Marzoug's loyalty a bit further, cement his commitment to the organization, and feed its coffers, Rachid and Nasser instructed him to carry out some hold-ups in the Paris region. A classic technique, with paramilitary groups. Rachid ironically dubbed it "Operation Sato" [possibly a play on Algeria's "Overseas Public Works Company," Societe Anonyme de Travaux Outre-mer]. In 1992 and 1993, armed with pistols, Uzi, and tear gas, Marzoug Hamel and his pals perpetrated a number of heists. With the help of Stephane and Redouane, he robbed a jewelry shop in 19th arrondissement, not far from La Chapelle. They brought the jewels to Nasser, who fenced them in bulk for Fr250,000. The three robbers split Fr15,000, and the rest was pocketed by Nasser "for the organization." With Redouane and Kamal Benakcha, Marzoug next fell on a rich Algerian butcher on his way to the bank to deposit the day's proceeds from his four "Kotbi" butcher-shops, well-known to everyone in Barbes. The booty: Fr170,000, of which Fr120,000 went to Nasser. Sometimes the larcenies were less "glorious," like the theft of several motorbikes, which netted only a few thousand francs. Foreign exchange kiosks, supermarkets, fish shops: With and without Marzoug, the gang played suburban hooligan for the sake of the "cause." A fact that occasioned a measure of distress to our protagonist, who cherished loftier ambitions more in line with his crusader ideals.

Sensing that his commitment was wavering, Rachid and Nasser offered him the exaltation of a jihad more to his liking: Sarajevo. During the winter of 1992, Marzoug Hamel spent two months in the mountains overlooking the Bosnian capital. As a member of Islamic commando teams making strikes against the Serbs, he got his first taste of fear, cold, and bullet wounds. Returning to Paris, he felt like a hero. And went back to armed robberies, this time with no misgivings. In 1993 Marzoug received advanced training in Lebanon and Jordan, in the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] camps. All this—he knew it, and he accepted it—for one specific purpose: to strike a blow, when the time should come, at the heart of Morocco, the heart of the regime, which would ignite the explosion that would destroy the monarchy. Did he participate in the September 1993 attacks against the McDonalds restaurant in Casablanca and the SMDC bank in Oujda? That's what he claimed, after his arrest, while being held for questioning at a Fes police station. While this confession has yet to be confirmed, it would certainly not be unreasonable. Rachid and Nasser encouraged their disciples to reconnoiter the terrain and make contacts, in the field, that could later be turned to good account. It seems, for example, that Marzoug, Kamal, Redouane, and Stephane, were indeed in Morocco at that time and had entered into [romantic] relations with some young Moroccan women whom they promised to marry. In the statements deposed by Benakcha and Hamel, a number of women's first names appear rather frequently: Hayat, Naima, Saadia, Najia—each conquest representing another potential hide-out.

One day in July 1994, Rachid and Said summoned the members of the organization to a mysterious rendezvous in the Bois de Boulogne, on the outskirts of Paris. Marzoug, Kamal, Stephane, Redouane, Tarek, and the others were all there. The leaders unveiled the details of the Morocco operation. Four groups, made up of emigres and "locals," were to go into action on the same day, at precisely the same hour, in four parts of the country: Tangier, Fes, Marrakech, and Casablanca. Marzoug Hamel and Abderrazak Mountassir were part of the fourth team, whose objective was Casablanca's main synagogue. After a final round of training not far from Avignon, the commandoes met again in Paris at the end of July. Rachid distributed Fr15,000 to each of them to defray their "mission expenses." The weapons, he said, were already in position. On 2 August, Marzoug embarked on a tour bus to Morocco, via Spain. In his pocket: another false French passport, in the name of Abderrahmane Waka. On 4 August he arrived in Tangier. The following day, at 0100 hours, a man by the name of Mohamed Azil, whom he had met during a previous trip to Morocco, came to meet him at the Casablanca bus station.

For three weeks Marzoug lived at Azil's place, in a small room, waiting for the call from Rachid telling them when D day would be. The equipment was already there, carefully packed: two Uzis, a 9-mm carbine, ammunition, three walkie-talkies, nylon stockings to mask their faces. Abderrazak Mountassir soon joined them, as did a "local" named Meziane. The impatient commander marked time, jumping whenever the phone rang. One day, finally, "Cinema Scheherazade" called: D day would be 24 August, a Wednesday. Losing no time, the three men got to work reconnoitering the objective. Their inspection of the immediate vicinity of the Beth-El synagogue at Place Verdun showed it to be very well guarded. Trying to force their way into it would be suicidal. Mountassir flatly refused to go up against such odds. Meziane was less than enthusiastic, and so was Marzoug. Rachid, contacted by telephone, raged like a madman at them and called them cowards. The scolding unnerved Mountassir, who disappeared and went back to France. No matter: Marzoug and Meziane decided on a new objective, the Jewish cemetery of Ben M'Sik, on the Mediouna road. Another reconnoitering, another "disappointment"—the disappearance of Meziane, who remained in Morocco only to be arrested in early September. Marzoug then turned to his host, Mohamed Azil, the only remaining member of the team, and explained his plan: Marzoug would bicycle to the Jewish cemetery with the Uzi automatic in his backpack; he would lie in wait for a group of Jews, open fire, then escape in the car that Azil would rent. Azil need only stand by, at the corner, ready to drive the getaway car.

But Mohamed Azil too was scared of participating in such an insane operation, with no possibility of withdrawal. He disappeared and fled back to France.

Thus Marzoug, on 24 August 1994, was alone. "Go on without them, you're a real mujahidin, they're just women"! Rachid hammered at him over the telephone. On 25 August, Marzoug saw TV news footage of the attack that his pals Redouane, Stephane, and Kamal had just perpetrated in Marrakech. He would not let it be said he was a coward. So he rented a white 205, put the loaded Uzi in his backpack, and on Friday 26 August at 1000 hours arrived at the Jewish cemetery. There was no one in sight. What should he do? Wait for a few of the faithful to arrive? Suddenly the criminal folly of his plan shook Marzoug's resolve. And he was frightened. He emptied his ammo clip against the cemetery wall and fled.

Back at the home of Azil's family, he called up Rachid on his Itineris. The chief barked out some insults but then calmed down: "Don't move, someone will come get you and take you back to France." The extraordinary thing is, Marzoug believed him. So he waited, with his weapons. And he waited until 7 September, the day the police came to pick him up: His pals in Marrakech and Fes had denounced him.

Hauled off blindfolded in a police van, Marzoug Hamel was quickly transferred to the Fes police station for a week of strenuous interrogation.

Today, behind prison bars, Marzoug says that the whole affair was absurd, that Rachid and Nasser betrayed him after manipulating him, and that never, in his heart, did he intend to kill anyone. The deadly wanderings of these lost children of fundamentalism, the dormitory cities, and squalid Islamic slums, who wanted to destabilize Morocco, have ended as they began: in despair.

[Box, p 17]

Unanswered Questions

A number of questions remain unanswered in what has come to be called the "Marrakech affair."

First of all, the extremely rapid reaction of the French police was surprising. Called into the case by Interpol-Rabat, which between 25 and 30 August 1994 sent them no fewer than six information reports and requests for cooperation and assistance signed by Ahmed Missaoui, French investigators swung into action at dawn on 1 September, dismantling a goodly part of the network in France. Not without first correcting a number of the addresses furnished by the Moroccans. Obviously, they [i.e., the French investigators] were already well informed about most of the terrorist network.

A second surprise has been the divergence of views between Paris and Rabat on who masterminded the conspiracy. According to Judge Bruguiere, whose new rogatory commission on 7 November explicitly named FIS and GIA as responsible, the whole thing was an Islamist affair. To his Moroccan counterpart, Judge Bouguettaya, things were not so simple: The orders might actually have come from Algeria's Military Security. That seems passing strange, because on 30 August 1994, in a letter sent to the Paris public prosecutor, Commissioner Marion of the Judicial Police central directorate had indicated a convergence of French and Moroccan assessments: "According to the Moroccan services, this organization, with ties to Muslim fundamentalist movements, particularly the MJIM, was aimed at destabilizing the Moroccan economy.... These operations appear to have been orchestrated from France by Muslim fundamentalists in retaliation for the surrender of GIA leader Abdelhak Layada to Algerian authorities and the confinement of FIS members to an'assigned residence' in Folembray."

The case of Tarek Felha, who participated in the Marrakech killing, is also curious: The French and Moroccan police now demanding his extradition (from Munich, where he has been incarcerated since his arrest in Germany in late December) had somehow managed to let him slip away, under mysterious circumstances.

On 26 September 1994, two days after the attack, Felha, accompanied by Redouane Hammadi, was in a bus that was stopped by police at a checkpoint in Taounir, between Fes and Oujda. Redouane was arrested, but Felha was not. But Tarek, who showed police a passport in his own name, could scarcely have been unknown to them, since in March of the same year he was held briefly for questioning in Oujda for possession of videotapes of sermons of Madani and Benhadj.

Flying back to Paris on 27 August, Felha was soon spotted and followed by French police. In late October he was seen in a telephone booth in Plaine Saint-Denis, in the company of Abdelkrim Afkir, aka Nasser. But again, no one came to pick him up. Why?

A final point: the rapidity with which the case is being brought to trial in Fes, even though Judge Bruguiere has not yet finished his investigation, and even though defense attorneys have not yet had access to the Moroccan casefile. Despite the understandable outrage felt in Morocco after the Marrakech attack, and despite the understandable questions being asked in Rabat about the real masterminds behind the people AL BAYANE calls "terrorists infiltrated from overseas," the prosecutors should not be pressured into rushing to trial prematurely. The credibility of Morocco's judicial system is at stake.

Sudan

Claim of U.S. Plan To Invade Sudan Refuted

95AA0104C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Feb 95 p 6

[Report by Sudanese correspondent Muhammad al-Hasan Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir has accused the United States of planning to invade Sudan, just as it invaded Haiti. He made the accusation in an interview he gave to the Iraqi youths' television channel and carried by the Jordanian AL-DUSTUR newspaper. Al-Bashir said that the "Sudanese Government is mobilizing 500,000 Sudanese volunteers, besides the regular forces and the police forces, to confront the American invasion."

Al-Bashir made his accusation in reaction to a statement by Newt Gingrich, the new speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. In his statement, Gingrich called for the need to prevent the fundamentalists from taking over power in any country and to devise and implement a policy aimed to overthrow fundamentalist regimes, which currently help the violent movements in the Islamic world. He said that priority would be given in this regard to overthrowing the present regimes in Iran and Sudan. In an address to more than 400 U.S. civilian and military officials, Gingrich pointed out that "the United States will abandon its current policy, which only reacts to the fundamentalist challenge, and go on the offensive." He added: "We must remove the motive from the man of violence and go beyond the language of economic sanctions and political condemnations."

It is certain and clear that the views of the new speaker of U.S. House do not reflect a House policy nor have they been submitted as a recommendation to the U.S. administration, which is not bound to implement the House recommendations. It is known that the Republican Party is enjoying a majority in both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. A noticeable phenomenon is that most of the winning representatives are young and anxious to make changes in the U.S. domestic and foreign policies. Reviewing the political developments in the United States, we find that the Democratic Party has usually had a majority in the two houses of Congress, while the Republican Party has had the advantage in the White House. It should be recalled that George Bush was the last Republican president. He succeeded Ronald Reagan, who served two terms in the White House. Under the Republican presidents, the policy of the White House was not drawn up by the Democratic majority in the two houses of Congress, although, often, the Democrats could have obstructed or foiled policies adopted or desired by the President.

The U.S. Administration might accept the views of the new speaker of the House about the need to confront terrorism and, what he called, fundamentalist violence, and the need for plans to overthrow the regimes in Iran and Sudan. This is perhaps what the U.S. administration has wanted and hoped for, but could not get from the Democratic majority in Congress, prompting the U.S. administration then to send conflicting hints regarding the situation in Algeria and even Iran. As for Sudan, it is clear that the explosions' case, which is being heard by a U.S. court, and the press reports about the terrorist plans, the destruction, death, and material losses have mobilized the American people against the advocates of Islamic extremism, particularly against Sudan, because a group of Sudanese masterminded the terrorist plan. There were even hints and signs that Sudanese diplomats at the United Nations may have been involved in the plot. Perhaps what made matters worse is that Siddiq 'Ali Siddiq, the main defendant after Shaykh 'Umar Abd-al-Rahman, has turned into a prosecution witness and pleaded guilty to all counts. The recording of his conversations with a U.S. intelligence agent referred clearly to the effective involvement of Sudanese parties in the implementation of the big explosions' plot and harboring the perpetrators in Sudan.

Unfortunately for the Sudanese regime, besides being accused of harboring and supporting terrorists and being placed on the terrorism list by the United States, most of Sudan's neighbors have complained about its interference in their internal affairs. The first of these neighbors was fraternal Egypt, then Ethiopia and finally Eritrea and Uganda. The last two countries have lodged complaints with the UN Security Council regarding Sudan's exportation of terrorism. Naturally, the United States has real interests in the security and stability of the Horn of Africa. Eritrean President Issaias Afeworke's recent visit to the United States and U.S. National Security adviser Anthony Lake's visit to the Horn of Africa have undoubtedly raised the tone of U.S. indignation against Sudan. In statements attributed to him, Lake said that he listened for four and a half hours to Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, and that the situation in Sudan took a large part of the time. The U.S. official said that Khartoum's policy toward southern Sudan and the states in the region was "in the U.S. view totally catastrophic. It was catastrophic to the people and threatened stability and security in the Horn of Africa." He added: "We have launched major humanitarian aid programs in an attempt to deal with the human tragedy in southern Sudan. We are working with other governments in the area to see how we can contain the influence of the Sudanese Government. We will do this until the government changes its positions and begins to act according to the principles of international behavior, which we think governments must follow."

Another U.S. official said: "We have been disturbed by Sudan's support for international terrorism and its attempt to export extremism to regional states."

Thus, Sudanese-American relations have clearly reached the height of tension and the point of an irrevocable rift. However, is the United States really thinking of invading Sudan as Lt. Gen. al-Bashir said?

All signs indicate that the United States does not intend to invade Sudan with American forces. The hardliners in the U.S. House of Representatives, who called for plans to overthrow the regime in Sudan, have themselves submitted a bill to the U.S. Congress entitled "National Security Revitalization Document," calling for a reduction in U.S. contributions to UN peace-keeping operations. This is an unprecedented step designed to prevent the United States using American forces to intervene in countries like Haiti or in peacekeeping operations in countries like Somalia. This prompted the U.S. secretaries of state and defense to convene a news conference to denounce the bill and to draw attention to its repercussions, paving the way for the U.S. President's rejection of the bill.

It is clear from these signs that the United States has no intention of invading Sudan. American forces, anyhow, are not supposed to overthrow the regime in Khartoum. The Sudanese people do not want or need such U.S. action, because most of the Sudanese, who oppose the regime, can plan to change the regime. The Sudanese people have toppled two military dictatorships. They did that when the situation in Sudan was better than it is now in terms of the standard of living, foreign relations, and human rights. All that the Sudanese opposition needs, I think, is assistance and support and not a foreign force to overthrow the regime. It seems that conditions have become more suitable for the Sudanese opposition to achieve this objective.

Therefore, the Sudanese people do not want, nor does the United States plan, to invade Sudan, like the one that took place in Haiti, as Lt. Gen. al-Bashir has said. His statement can only be described as an attempt to cause alarm. It reflects his fear of the United States and its influence on developments in the world. Perhaps he also wanted to exploit the U.S. threat to stir up the emotions of the Sudanese people. Calling for the mobilization of 500,000 Sudanese volunteers to confront a presumed American invasion could also be understood as an attempt to divert the Sudanese people's attention from their sufferings. I do not think that this call is something new and exciting, which would rally the Sudanese people, because they have often heard similar calls in the past months. They heard it when the Sudanese-Egyptian crisis broke out over Hala'ib; they heard it after diplomatic relations with Eritrea were broken off; and most recently they heard it following the tension between Uganda and Sudan and the exchange of accusations about military actions between the two sides. By their distinctive political and national sense, the Sudanese people must be asking themselves: why are they in a state of war with all their neighbors and why are they involved in a confrontation with the biggest military power in the world, when throughout their history they enjoyed excellent relations with their neighbors and with the various countries of the world? They realize that the government's policy alone is responsible for all the troubles they are facing.

Perhaps the government is aware how indifferent the people are to its call for the mobilization of 500,000 Sudanese. It is aware that the state cannot finance such a project, which, in fact, is not based on proof that the United States will invade Sudan. Perhaps the regime still remembers the first time it tried to rally the Sudanese people when the American forces landed in Somalia about three years ago. The Sudanese Government thought then that this was a prelude to the invasion of Sudan, and opposed it. Defying the regime, the Sudanese people staged spontaneous demonstrations, raising such slogans as: The Americans are preferable to misery.

Sudan's current situation, its successive crises, and its increasing isolation in the world are better reasons for the Sudanese regime to mobilize the people. The people should be mobilized not to fight the United States or deal with problems with Sudan's neighbors by military means, but to achieve reconciliation and end the war. The people should be given the chance to choose the system of government they want through free elections to be witnessed by the world, a system of government that can safeguard their unity and achieve their interests. Will the regime understand this clear fact before it is too late? Only God knows.

Regime's 'Conflicting' Words, Deeds Viewed

95AA0104A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Feb 95 p 6

[Report by Muhammad al-Hasan Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of conflicting positions and signs came out of the Sudanese capital last Thursday [9 March] and Friday. We will not say they were puzzling, because everything in Sudan now is puzzling. Brigadier General Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of the transitional National Assembly, announced before the assembly members that he had a positive meeting with al—Sadiq al-Mahdi, former prime minister and leader of the banned al-Ummah Party. The meeting, he said, dealt with the country's political and economic problems. Khalifah added that they will hold further conciliation meetings in the future to achieve a common view. The official Omdurman radio and Sudanese News Agency reported that "Khalifah discussed with al-Mahdi the efforts for national accord, and that these efforts will continue." Thursday evening, Lieutenant General al-Bashir issued a presidential decree, removing Foreign Minister Dr. Husayn Abu-Salih from his post and replacing him with 'Ali 'Uthman Taha, Dr. al-Turabi's deputy, the coup's engineer, and the effective head of the executive authority. The reshuffle involved the appointment of other cadres of the National Islamic Front [NIF] to ministerial posts. The reshuffle signified the adoption of a harder line and the entrenchment of more radical NIF members in authority. This was inconsistent with what the parliamentary speaker said just a few hours earlier. The removal of Dr. Abu-Salih from the Foreign Ministry means a defeat for preventive or detente diplomacy, so to speak, because al-Turabi's deputy is a known radical. He brought Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Dr. Ghazi Salah-al-Din from the presidential palace to the Foreign Ministry. Dr. Ghazi is also known for his hardline position and for flagrantly interfering in foreign affairs before he assumed the post of minister of state in the Foreign Ministry. His positions and statements have always contradicted and opposed the positions and statements of the dismissed foreign minister. We wrote in these columns a few weeks ago that in view of the conflict in foreign policy between Dr. Abu-Salih and Dr. Ghazi, Western diplomats in Khartoum have started considering Dr. Ghazi as an authoritative spokesman expressing the view of the NIF in the government. Then we cited Abu-Salih as saying that he refuses to resign and would rather be dismissed from his post. They have now removed him in the last stage of their bid to remove officials who express the views of certain political forces.

Thus, it seems clear that the ministerial appointments' decree contradicted what the National Assembly speaker has said. It is known that the parliamentary speaker, who is appointed according to the Constitution, is the second ranking official in the state. How was the Cabinet reshuffle decree issued the same day the world press and news agencies were carrying the parliamentary speaker's statement? Is there a power struggle going on among various wings inside the NIF? Are there real forces that rule and others that unknowingly have become marginal and less important and thus their actions appear inconsistent with what is going on? We must rule out the possibility that the issue is just a change of roles and a maneuver agreed upon by the regime's parties. When the National Assembly speaker talks about reconciliations in the morning and then the head of the regime announces a cabinet reshuffle in the evening, thus giving the impression that the front is gaining greater control over the government through elements representing the front's extreme hardliners, this can only be classified as disagreement and conflict inside the ruling NIF group. If we do not rule out the possibility that the front's leadership is still using its old sterile maneuvering methods, hoping to cause a rift among the opposition by claiming that it is nearing a reconciliation with al-Mahdi or hinting that it has established an alliance with him, the front certainly seems not to have learned anything from experience, and the people will increasingly despise it. Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi had always clearly, frankly, and boldly denied any reports or rumors about an understanding or reconciliation with him. He has repeatedly declared that he will not accept a reconciliation with the regime nor participate in it.

Al-Mahdi has a famous saying: These people are riding a wild horse, and we will not ride it with them. Yet if they decide to dismount, we will take control of the horse. This simply means that if they wish to hand over power to those legitimately entitled to it, we will take it over from them. However, under no circumstances will we share the rule with them. Al-Mahdi has repeatedly and explicitly ruled out the possibility of a bilateral agreement with this regime. He always said that all the political forces must accept and take part in any accord, and that the most important conditions of any accord should be the restoration of multiparty democracy and respect for human rights in Sudan.

This is exactly what happened one day after the parliamentary speaker's statement. Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi wrote an article for AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT under the headline "Our Split From the Front is Irrevocable." In this article, al-Mahdi affirmed that the split between his party and the NIF is irrevocable. He accused the front of "seeking to impose a super-party system on Sudan, after establishing a system that depends on the legitimacy of coercion and fait accomplis." The readers probably remember that al-Mahdi had addressed a group at al-Ansar two days before it was claimed that he had a positive meeting with National Assembly Speaker Khalifah. In his address, al-Mahdi said that al-Ansar's leadership was ready to face direct elections after the fall of the al-Bashir regime. How can remarks such as "the fall of the al-Bashir regime" be consistent with alliance or cooperation with him? In this respect, any talk about reconciliation is directly related to what can be described as bullfights, so to speak.

The way to serious reconciliation begins with the regime being frank with itself and with the people. It should declare with absolute courage and honesty that its experience in government has failed, that Sudan cannot be ruled unilaterally by certain political forces, and that all the political forces are called upon to take part not in the government but in agreement on the way this country should be governed. This way should ensure the country's unity and satisfy the ambitions and aspirations of all its different races, cultures, religions, and traditions. The first step in the ladder of ruling Sudan begins with the establishment of multiparty democracy.

By the same measure, the opposition must have a unified and specific view on this issue. It is unreasonable to think that there is nothing else the opposition can say or do except raise the slogan of toppling the regime and the three no's: no negotiations, no understanding, and no reconciliation.

Were the main opposition forces to agree on a specific government program, the form of the transitional government, and other measures to ensure Sudan's unity and convince the different parties about the new regime, they would definitely remove any doubts or fears about what is being said regarding reconciliation. This is because every thing will be clear and the contacts and consultations will cause no fear or suspicion and there will be no room for any individual or party to misinterpret what is going on.

The time has come for the opposition forces to resolve these matters. This will not be possible unless they convene their expected conference soon. I am confident that when they hold their conference, they will emerge with a unified position. The regime will find itself facing two options: the option of reconciliation, whose walls cannot be penetrated by means of fictitious maneuvers, and the option of confrontation, in which the regime will not emerge victorious. Then the regime leaders will think more than once before they decide to face the situation seriously and realistically or engage in naive maneuvers, which the opposition forces can face with their considered and declared accords.

One remark that deserves consideration is that the Arab brothers, in particular, have not shown any interest in Sudan, which is one of the largest African Arab states. If they did, Sudan could become Africa's gateway to the Arab world and a safety valve for Arab-African integration. The fact that we have not yet seen or heard that any fraternal Arab state has mediated or even tried to mediate to reconcile between the north and south and even to listen to the views of the southerners, who feel bitter and suspicious about the overall Arab position, shows the lack of Arab interest in Sudan and its situation. In contrast, African brothers and some influential countries in the world have shown interest in the situation and have undertaken a noble mission to reconcile between the north and south. Although we have heard about Libyan or Yemeni mediation to improve the relations between the Sudanese Government and some Arab countries, we have never heard about any Arab initiative aimed at unifying the views of the northerners, with all their influential forces, and the regime, with its shortsighted views that threaten Sudan's unity. This situation has weakened the north's position and made it appear in the eyes of the world, without any reservations, as the plunderer of the minorities' resources and the oppressor of all the non-Arab minorities.

Out of fairness we must say that African states have played a more significant role in dealing with the issues of government, war, and peace in Sudan. Take, for example, the initiative of the IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] states, and before that the Nigerian and Kenyan mediation. Even the United States has mediated to unite the conflicting southern factions. Nothing equivalent has happened on the Arab side, neither with regard to the rift between the northerners and the southerners nor the rifts among the political forces in the north. This makes us wonder what effect this lack of Arab interest will have on Sudan's unity, on its distinctive role in Arab-African affairs, and even on Arab existence in the African continent.

The Arab interest in Sudan has been extremely marginal. It did not exceed a few traditional lines in the statement of the Islamic summit conference in Rabat, rhetorically expressing solidarity with Sudan's unity. Yet, the Islamic summit's position was much better than the position of the Arab League council, which met in Cairo at the foreign ministers' level last year. It issued unsuccessful resolutions that angered all the southern Sudanese people and most of the northern people. They only pleased the ruling front in Sudan.

Sudan is currently facing critical choices. Its regime is isolating itself. The Sudanese people are facing one tragedy after another. The bullfights among all the influential and uninfluential forces are quickly dimming the glimmer of reconciliation. The threats to its unity are increasing. The issue of the big explosions in New York is undermining its reputation. For all these reasons, Sudan deserves a serious and effective gesture by its Arab brothers to stop forces from outside the African Arab environment from drawing a new map for Sudan, destroying its unity and driving a wedge between the Arab and African worlds.

Minister Comments on Arab Reconciliation, NPT

JN0703133295 Paris AL-MUHARRIR in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p 8

[Interview with Dr. Ghazi Salah-al-Din, minister of state at the Foreign Ministry, by Tal'at Rumayh in Khartoum; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Rumayh] What is your view regarding Arab reconciliation?

[Salah-al-Din] I believe that the climate is appropriate now because of the failures in the Middle East political settlement now that the countries which sought the current settlement are incapable of presenting radical solutions to the problem. It is also clear that the strong Arab identities, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria are targeted and the promises of prosperity poured on them are only a kind of political deception.

These facts have produced a new reality that is being exposed by the real intentions of the existing world order. I believe that the Arab leaders will become aware of the common grounds among all Arab states and governments.

[Rumayh] Speaking about Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria leads us to talk about the Alexandria meeting. Has Sudan issued an official reaction supporting or opposing the Alexandria meeting?

[Salah-al-Din] No official reaction has been issued. However, we welcomed the meeting in many statements. We said we should not exaggerate with optimism or pessimism. We consider the Alexandria meeting a positive and new move. The meeting could be expanded to include other influential states, such as the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, Libya, and others. If we can gather all these countries I believe we can then create an atmosphere which is appropriate for Arab unity.

[Rumayh] Has Sudan issued an official reaction to the Arab refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] if Israel does not sign it?

[Salah-al-Din] No such reaction has been issued. However, we fully support Egypt's stand and strongly back it. We believe that the reasons for the Egyptian stand are so strong that they cannot be refuted. It will be a mistake if Egypt signs the treaty while Israel fails to sign. Therefore, we strongly support the Egyptian leadership's stand and call on all Arab countries and the Egyptian people to support this stand. Sudan will link its stand on this issue with a unified Arab position. [passage omitted]

Saddam's Son Said 'Seriously Wounded' in Coup Attempt

LD0703152195 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1449 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 7 Feb—An Iraqi opposition official has stated that 'Udayy Saddam, the elder son of the ruler of Baghdad [Saddam Husayn], has been seriously wounded in a coup attempt aimed at assassinating Saddam Husayn.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency here today, Jamal al-Wakil, secretary general of the Iraqi Islamic Accord Movement [Harakat al-Wifaq al-Islami al-'Iraqiyyah], said: The coup attempt [plan] which took place four days ago included the assassination of 'Udayy Saddam [words indistinct], and the assassination of Saddam Husayn by bringing about a military coup.

He added: The first plan was carried out, and 'Udayy Saddam was seriously wounded as a result of it. However, he said: It has not been confirmed whether he was killed. He said: After the attempted coup, more than 20 officers of various military ranks and air force pilots were arrested the al-Taji and al-Rashid military camps [in Baghdad] on charges of participating in the attempt.

Regarding the ongoing events in the north and south of Iraq, al-Wakil said: The national revolution forces [quwwat al-thawrah al-wataniyyah], made up of military detachments of the Unified Iraqi National Congress, backed by the forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan parties, have started to march on the cities of Mosul and Karkuk to liberate them from the Baghdad regime.

He added: The sons of the cities of Mosul and Karkuk have responded to the national revolution forces' call to lay down arms and join the liberating forces in order to stop the bloodshed and save efforts [as received]. A large number of senior army officers have also joined the revolution forces.

He confirmed the fall of Samarra' and said: The town of Samarra' has fallen completely to the national revolution forces. Following that, the regime pulled the 5th and 7th divisions out of Karkuk for fear of them joining the opposition forces. They have been kept out of the battle arenas and replaced by the Republican Guard Forces.

Regarding events in the south of Iraq, al-Wakil said: An overwhelming popular movement has swept the towns of al-Kut and Basrah, the second largest city in Iraq, which has been able to drive out some of the regime's forces in some of the sub-districts belonging to these cities, such as al-Qurnah and al-Madinah.

In another development, Iraqi opposition sources have said that operations are being prepared to capture the cities of Karkuk and Mosul, and on setting up a provisional government after the liberation of the two cities. The sources said that that would be in tandem with creating violent (?disturbances) in the south against the regime's security organization and military forces.

Government Security Measures in Baghdad Reported

Roadblocks Set Up; Troops Deployed

NC0703161795 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Units of the Emergency Forces have been seen occupying the approaches to Baghdad, city squares, public spaces, and streets, which proves that the ruling regime is living in a state of fear [words indistinct].

[Words indistinct] set up numerous roadblocks on the road between Baghdad and al-Najaf [words indistinct] with their addresses and the purpose of their visit.

They said that large military units deployed on the road between Baghdad and Mosul in a show of force to intimidate the citizens.

The Baghdad regime always resorts to such measures on religious feasts and national occasions to restrict the citizens' movements and prevent them from visiting each other in a despairing attempt to reduce their antiregime activities.

Machine Guns Said in Place at Party Buildings

NC0703160195 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1442 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources announced yesterday that tyrant Saddam's regime has declared a state of maximum alert in Baghdad and that machine guns have been installed over the roofs of al-Ba'th Party buildings in the Iraqi capital.

The sources said that several clashes have taken place between the Baghdad regime and Iraqi Kurdish fighters in the north and the resistance men in the south.

The sources said that the Saddam regime's forces moved north and south early this week. They added that two divisions of the tyrant's forces moved from Karkuk in the north to the southern Governorate of al-'Amarah and that units of the Special Republican Forces, including an armored battalion and many rocket launchers, moved to a site more than 200 km from Tikrit in the areas controlled by the Iraqi Kurds.

Baghdad Suburbs Said Scene of Clashes

NC0703163695 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1442 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Jordanian sources have affirmed that disturbances have occurred in the capital Baghdad prompting the regime authorities to [word indistinct] units there to control the greatly deteriorating security conditions.

In press statements yesterday, the sources said Baghdad and its suburbs were the scene of clashes and mounting security [word indistinct] last week, which confirms the weakening ability of the regime's security agencies to control the situation.

The sources added that the Baghdad ruler's military movements in northern and southern Iraq and the tightening of security measures in Baghdad come in the wake of a series of jihad operations in various Iraqi cities.

AL-HAYAH Details Security Conditions

JN0703194795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Zuhayr Qusaybati in London and Salamah Ni'mat in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Well-informed Jordanian sources have confirmed that disturbances have occurred in Baghdad where "the state's prestige has reached a new low." The sources noted increasing roadblocks in the city, a development which has been corroborated by the Iraqi opposition circles. The opposition circles have been circulating unconfirmed reports of a coup attempt targeting Saddam Husayn. The Iraqi dinar has been hit hard and dropped to an all time low, standing yesterday at 1,030 dinars to one U.S. dollar.

A source in the United Iraqi National Congress [INC] said that fierce battles broke out in northern Iraq yesterday between Iraqi Army units on the one hand and forces belonging to the Congress and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] on the other. Reports also speak of continuing clashes with the army in southern Iraq.

Well-informed Jordanian sources said yesterday that the Iraqi military moves in northern and southern Iraq and the increasing security measures in Baghdad and suburbs follow a "series of sporadic incidents that reflect deterioration in the state of law and order in certain areas." The sources cite arrivals from Baghdad over the past few days as stressing that security measures have increased and roadblocks multiplied on the streets of the Iraqi capital and its suburbs. They spoke of "riots and increasing security violations" over the past few weeks, as well as attacks on government employees.

The sources said that the increase in security violations "reflects a sharp deterioration in the state's prestige and the loss of hope that the deteriorating economic conditions would improve." The sources said that the latest developments could be linked to the latest report by UN Special Commission chairman Ralf Ekeus concerning Iraq's abidance by UN Security Council resolutions, "dissipating hopes that the economic sanctions would be lifted."

The Jordanian sources also said that whereas the Russian and French assert—based on previous expectations that Ekeus report would be in favor of Iraq—that the economic sanctions on Iraq would be eased, "Ekeus report demonstrated that the United States continues to be the supreme decisionmaker concerning the economic sanctions." U.S. sources had ruled out a positive Ekeus report even before Ekeus revealed its contents.

It may be mentioned that official Jordanian sources had earlier warned of the dire consequences of continuing the sanctions on Iraq and its effect on regional stability and security.

Sources in the Iraqi opposition sources said that "Baghdad lives in abnormal conditions and that the authorities have increased military patrols and roadblocks in al-Kazimiyah, al-Thawrah, al-Shu'lah, and other areas in the capital." The source added that clashes with the Iraqi Army continued in al-Qurnah and in the al-Basrah Governorate.

A highly placed source in the opposition INC told AL-HAYAH that "fierce battles are raging in the Kifri-Kallar-Chamchamal-Laylan sector north of Karkuk between the Iraqi forces on the one hand and the forces of the Congress and the Jalal Talabani-led PUK forces on the other." The source said that "heavy artillery and tanks are being used and that Congress and PUK forces penetrated the Iraqi Army defenses in Qarah hangir and control the (Qarah Hangir)-Laylan axis and that fierce fighting was still continuing yesterday evening.

The source said that the Congress is carrying out a military plan and did not rule out the possibility that the current developments in Iraq would develop into an "uprising."

A bulletin by the INC's "Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation" said that Saddam Husayn's son, Qusayy, and Defense Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid are commanding Republican Guard forces that have headed for Karkuk and that a state of mobilization is prevailing in Baghdad where security measures around the Ba'th Party buildings have been tightened. The Corporation said that the city of Samarra' (80 km north of Baghdad) was in a state of uprising last night (Saturday/Sunday) and that important utilities are controlled by the rebels. It said that two Iraqi Army divisions were withdrawn from Karkuk to the al-'Amarah sector in the south.

In the Kurdish areas in northern Iraq, the Mas'ud Barzani-led Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] reaffirmed its call on Jalal Talabani-led Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] to withdraw all of its forces from Irbil.

A spokesman for the PUK told AL-HAYAH that PUK forces yesterday morning engaged the Iraqi Army in Altun Kupri area and that the "Iraqi artillery continued to shell the PUK positions on the outskirts of Irbil and Chamchamal."

Answering a question posed by AL-HAYAH, the spokesman said that "the Iraqi Government is planning an all-out attack against the Kurdish area," where the western coalition is imposing a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel and established the "save haven" after the Gulf war to protect the Iraqi Kurds from any attack.

Asked how Baghdad will benefit from a military strike against the Kurds on the eve of the periodic review of the international embargo imposed on Iraq, which the UN Security Council will conduct soon, the spokesman said: "The Iraq Government tries to exacerbate the military situation every time. It thinks that a domestic aggression may be swallowed, unlike the foreign aggression."

The PUK spokesman said that "All (Kurdish) efforts are now focused on facing Saddam's plan."

Asked about the size of the PUK forces that were withdrawn from Irbil, the spokesman said: "The PUK withdrew a large number of its forces to face the Iraqi military concentrations in Kifri, Chamchamal, Altun Kupri, Makhmur road, and the highway between Irbil and Mosul."

The spokesman noted that there was "some kind of an agreement sponsored by the Iraqi opposition that gives the Kurdish parties the chance to withdraw their forces (from certain positions) to face the Iraqi troops. We have implemented the agreement."

It is well known that Talabani and Barzani forces have been engaged in fierce battles against each other since December 1994. Mediation efforts sponsored by the INC failed to arrange a meeting between the two Kurdish leaders since then. Furthermore, the Iraqi Kurdistan government, which is shared fifty-fifty by the two parties, failed to meet in any session since November.

A high-level INC source told AL-HAYAH that the "PUK withdrew its troops from Irbil to face the Iraqi troops which continue to bombard Kifri, Kalar, and Chamchamal," and that "all KDP troops are expected to return today (yesterday) to the previous positions" in which they were deployed before the fighting between the two parties erupted.

The source added: "Before the PUK began withdrawing its troops (from Irbil) Barzani agreed to deposit all financial revenues, including the customs revenues, in the government banks in Dahuk, al-Sulaymaniyah, Karkuk, and Irbil. These funds will be dispensed under the supervision of the finance minister (of the Kurdish government), the Central Bank, and the INC."

He said the Iraqi military deployments on the outskirts of the areas controlled by the Kurds are motivated by "Saddam's desire to return to Kurdistan and finish the save havens." He said the Iraqi president "has almost lost all hope that the international embargo will be lifted and is now trying to create circumstances similar to those that preceded his recognition of Kuwait."

A spokesman for the KDP told AL-HAYAH that there are "Iraqi military deployments and a bombardment of Kifri and Chamchamal." He, however, said the reports on the size of these deployments are "exaggerated" and noted there was a "truce" between Barzani and Talabani parties "to which they are committed until things become clear. But they still do not have an agreement." He added that the PUK "withdrew a small number of its troops from Irbil and our basic demand remains that the PUK must withdraw all of its troops and evacuate all militias from the city before discussing any settlement" for the existing problems between the two parties. The spokesman stressed that the "other issues can be addressed at a later stage."

Government Forces, Opposition Moves Reported

Armor Division Reportedly Reinforced

NC0703154695 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1442 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources in southern Iraq have learned that tyrant Saddam's regime recently reinforced the 10th Armored Division positions in al-'Amarah Governorate. The sources say the reinforcements consisted of heavy weapons, including tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery, in addition to special forces units.

The 10th Armored Division is considered part of the emergency forces on which the criminal regime depends in confronting the people. This division formerly participated in storming the al-Ghawr areas in (Abu 'Ashrah).

Our sources add that the regime instructed units of its special forces in Baghdad to move to the southern areas in al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, and al-Nasiriyah Governorates.

Criminal Saddam has put criminal 'Ali Hasan al-Majid in charge of al-'Amarah Governorate, criminal Saddam Kamil in charge of al-Basrah Governorate, and criminal [name indistinct] al-Jahuri in charge of al-Nasiriyah Governorate.

Regime Displaces People in Karkuk, Khanaqin

NC0703161495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1442 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tyrant Saddam's authorities have launched a large-scale campaign to displace many families in Karkuk and Khanaqin cities. The authorities have forced hundreds of citizens to move to the southern areas.

Informed sources in northern Iraq say this campaign coincides with tyrant Saddam's moving of his military forces toward the safe havens in the north and the revolting areas in the south.

Opposition Head Comments on Clashes in North

JN0703174295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1712 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Press reports citing Iraqi opposition sources speak of disturbances and abnormal movements in Baghdad. Some speak of a coup attempt.

Our correspondent in Tehran, Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni, cited a statement by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, as saying that Baghdad is in a state of general mobilization. This is apparent from the deployment of antiaircraft guns on all government and semigovernmental buildings.

Baqir al-Hakim says that Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, is waging fierce battles against the Iraqi Army and that his forces took control of several villages around Karkuk as well as an artillery battalion. He said that the Iraqi Army has transferred Sukhoi-22 aircraft from the Karkuk to the Tirkrit base for fear they may fall into the hands of the attackers, especially after the appearance of an insurgency in the ranks of the III Army Corps deployed between al-'Uzayr and al-Qurnah in al-Basrah Governorate.

Baghdad has so far not commented on these reports.

PUK: Iraqi Helicopters Straf Kurdish Positions

NC0703204195 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2025 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] has announced that Iraqi helicopters strafed several Kurdish positions in Iraqi Kurdistan today. In a statement issued today, the PUK said that clashes broke out between PUK and Iraqi National Congress forces on the one hand and Iraqi armored and infantry troops on the other.

Helicopter Strikes, Clashes Detailed

NC0703192595 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We begin with the main story in the Middle East today—the military situation in Iraq.

According to reports from there, the Iraqi Army today continued to mass troops in the north and sent reinforcements to the south. The reports mention some incidents between the Iraqi opposition and the army in the southern city of al-Kut, 160 km from Baghdad.

People arriving in Jordan from Baghdad were quoted as saying that extraordinary security measures are being taken around government buildings in the Iraqi capital these days, but the United Nations has not yet confirmed any such reports.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] A tense situation still prevails in northern Iraq in the wake of armed clashes between Kurdish forces and forward units of the Iraqi forces in the border area in the last two days. Security reports mention Iraqi forces making simultaneous movements in the north and south of the country, especially in the al-Basrah area. Separate clashes also occurred in al-Kut city, some 160 km south of the capital Baghdad, where forces from the Republican Guards and the intelligence forces reinforced their guards around ministries and official departments.

[Iraqi National Congress member 'Aziz al-'Ilayyan] Our latest reports indicate that the Iraqi regime has for the first time introduced helicopters into the fighting. They are now intensively shelling (Qarajil), Laylan, and Chamchamal areas. This escalatory measure by the regime was, of course, preceded by another act—the massing of very large troop formations in an attempt to benefit from the problems prevalent in Kurdistan at that time. On the other hand, the regime thought that international pressure on the regime had begun to ease and therefore it tried to settle accounts with the Iraqi people in the areas outside the Iraqi regime's control.

Our nationalist forces confronted the Iraqi offensive and, according to our information, the nationalist forces not only held their positions, but also were able to make an advance, albeit small. We have unconfirmed information that even in Baghdad there was an armed clash last night.

[Correspondent] While Iraqi sources accused the United States of inciting these clashes to preclude the lifting of the international sanctions against Iraq, U.S. Delegate to the UN Madeleine Albright disclosed that Washington will block any attempt by the Security Council to ease sanctions on Iraq in the near future even if Iraq complies with resolutions concerning weapons. At a news conference, Albright confirmed that the United States opposes any easing of the sanctions and will veto any premature measure. But she asserted that Washington will reconsider two resolutions allowing Iraq to sell oil worth $ 1.6 billion to purchase food and medicine.

Elsewhere, arrivals from northern Iraq say the crossing point at Kifri has been closed to travelers to and from the Kurdish region. This is the crossing point the Kurds use to travel from al-Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq to Baghdad. [end recording]

PUK Official Views Regime's Military Buildup

NC0703164095 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1520 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the 4th anniversary of the 1991 uprising, brother Faridun 'Abd-al-Qadir, member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] Political Bureau and head of the Information Bureau, has made press statements to the daily Kurdish language newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY. In his statements, brother 'Abd- al-Qadir emphasized the PUK's leading and heroic role in igniting the uprising and in liberating vast areas of Kurdistan from the 'Aflaqite regime in Baghdad. [passage omitted]

Responding to a question about the suspect movements by the 'Aflaqite regime forces along the borders of the Kurdistan region, brother 'Abd-al-Qadir said that the Iraqi regime has long been preparing to launch a major offensive against the Kurdistan region. The regime threatened that if the Kurds do not conduct a dialogue with it, the Baghdad forces will attack Kurdistan.

Regarding the Baghdad regime's military preparations, the PUK official said that the regime's military capabilities have become weaker due to its isolation on international and regional levels. Therefore, the regime is unable to carry out its plans and threats. Furthermore, the regime's forces will refuse to implement its military orders.

Responding to another question about the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] leadership's stance on the current crisis and on the 'Aflaqite regime's military buildup, brother Faridun 'Abd-al-Qadir said that the KDP's position is expected because this leadership is unaware of the dimensions of the issue. The KDP leadership has no knowledge of the fact that the regime's 5th and 7th armored divisions were recently transferred to the al-'Amarah Governorate to carry out military operations there. The KDP is also unaware that the son of dictator Saddam and his defense minister escorted by units of the Republican Guard have arrived in Karkuk. Furthermore, an armored battalion was dispatched from Tikrit to Taqtaq and the Army has been placed on a maximum state of alert. [passage omitted]

PUK, Islamic Party Stress Need To Overthrow Regime

NC0703161695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1516 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation from the Political Bureau of the Islamic al-Da'wah Party in Iraq, led by Political Bureau member Hajj Abu-Mushtaq, at 1600 yesterday visited the offices of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's [PUK] Political Bureau. The visiting delegation was received by Political Bureau member Fu'ad Ma'sum and Khalid Ahmad, member of the PUK's National Relations Bureau.

During the meeting, the latest developments inside Iraq were discussed. The visiting delegates expressed their appreciation of the PUK's stands and their admiration for the enthusiasm of the Kurdish masses in the face of the 'Aflaqite regime's schemes and intentions. At the end of the meeting, emphasis was placed on the need to direct all efforts and energy toward the struggle for the people's aspirations and working to overthrow the dictatorial ruling regime in Baghdad.

Opposition Urges Overthrow of Saddam, Regime

Radio Promises Unabated Uprising

NC0703165295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1607 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Unscheduled announcement]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ladies and gentlemen: While the crises facing the Iraqi regime are intensifying, and while the masses of our Iraqi people are commemorating the memories of their overwhelming uprising in 1991, the Iraqi regime is amassing its troops along the border of the liberated areas of Kurdistan to carry out an aggression and inflict harm on the people of Kurdistan. Last night, the night of 6-7 March, these miserable troops began an attack against the (Guer) area of the Irbil Governorate. The regime believed that its collapsing troops could resist the heroic peshmerga of Kurdistan. However, the regime's calculations, as usual, proved to be inaccurate and to have no relation to reality. The Iraqi regime's troops have once again tried their wretched luck in the area of (Guer) and begun an attack against the region. The peshmerga of Kurdistan repulsed them and forced them to retreat after routing the regime's miserable troops and inflicting the heaviest losses in personnel and equipment on them.

This heroic confrontation proves that our Kurdish people and Kurdistan's peshmerga troops have not forgotten the memories of 1991 or the heroic actions they have demonstrated while confronting the remnants of the Iraqi ostriches. It also proves that their legitimate defense of Kurdistan at the present time is a natural extension of the 1991 uprising, an uprising that will not abate unless the dictatorship falls and Iraq is spared its evils and wrongdoings.

Radio Touts Prospects for Overthrowing Regime

NC0703170595 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1450 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq's internal conditions are growing worse and moving toward a state of chaos. There are signs that disturbances and crises will occur in Baghdad, in addition to the decisive new moves by Iraqi opposition groups in the north and south. Is it time, then, for a popular uprising in the various areas of Iraq?

Is the date of a military coup d'etat to overthrow the regime drawing near? Or will the United States make fresh military strikes against Iraq following the regime's recent violations in the north and in the wake of newspaper reports that Saddam's regime still possesses lethal weapons?

These are the questions in the minds of Iraq watchers. The capital, Baghdad, is experiencing new conditions and is evidently in a state similar to a woman going into labor, particularly as it has become clear that the international blockade and ostracism of the regime will continue.

The Iraqi people bear the brunt of these sanctions and pay an exorbitant price as a result of the blockade and its adverse effects on the lives of the majority of Iraqis. This puts into motion forces on the domestic front, strengthens the resolve of the popular resistance, increases the likelihood of an uprising, and stirs up popular resentment.

There have also been growing reactions by the Iraqi people in the wake of the regime's military movements against the northern regions, since these movements make it clear that the regime wishes to drag the Iraqi people into a new dreadful experience that will bring down on their heads further destruction, tragedies, and hardships. This has angered the masses, and they have started to show their anger in various ways. This has frightened the regime and forced the tyrant Saddam to take refuge in Tikrit as a precaution against possible political, military, or popular developments that will not favor him.

The opposition's moves in northern and southern Iraq came after the Saddamist regime's attempt to commit aggression against northern Iraq. The regime used missiles and heavy weapons in its assault on the northern towns of Kifri, Altun Kupri, and Chamchamal, provoking the anger of the Iraqi opposition factions, who rushed to the battle fronts to confront the regime's renewed hostility.

In the south the vanguards of the popular resistance have moved to deal strong blows to the regime's forces and mercenaries in order to take advantage of the situation in that area, ease Saddam's pressure on Iraqi Kurdistan, and expand the area of confrontation with the regime's henchmen and mercenaries. The opposition aims to prepare the ground to facilitate any opposition or popular military action to overthrow the regime once and for all.

Army Forces Urged To Join Kurds

NC0803072995 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 0500 GMT 8 Mar 95

["Letter From a Kurdish Peshmerga to his Brother the Iraqi Soldier"—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] My brother soldier: You know that when the Baghdad regime plans its crimes and reckless acts, it does not care about the people who will be sacrificed to implement these plans. For the regime, the soldier is a dead, worthless machine, and for the dictator of Baghdad, the Iraqi soldier has no family, no children or brothers, and does not belong to a mother and a father who worked hard to raise him. The Iraqi soldier is only a figure, fuel for igniting wars.

My brother the Iraqi soldier: You were the only loser in the battles of the dictatorship. In the chauvinistic war that the 'Aflaqites ignited against the people of Kurdistan in the mid-seventies over 60,000 soldiers were killed, according to regime figures. In the Iraq-Iran war, the figure was so huge that almost every Iraqi house had a victim of the mad, dictatorial war. During the invasion of Kuwait and the war to liberate it, the dictatorship pushed millions of Iraqis into a losing battle and left them to burn, starve, and die in one of the biggest tragedies of the age. The regime did not care about the people's pain or blood.

My brother the Iraqi soldier: Here is the dictatorial regime again throwing you into a new war against your brothers and the sons of your people, the Kurdish peshmerga fighters. We ask: Are the peshmergas your real enemies? Is it natural for the Iraqi soldier to fight against his Kurdish peshmerga brother to defend Baghdad's dictator, the enemy of the people and humanity?

As we now stand facing the dictatorship, we, the Kurdish peshmergas, are defending you and fighting for your own salvation. How long will your blood and dignity be disdained and how long will the rulers of Baghdad starve your families? Is it not time to get rid of the dictatorship? We trust your gallantry, son of the nation. The peshmergas of Kurdistan extend to you a hand of peace and brotherhood and invite you to join them in the struggle to liberate Iraq from the filth of the bloody, hateful regime in Baghdad. We welcome you, my brother Iraqi soldier, a companion on the road of struggle to overthrow the dictatorship. Regards from your brother, the Kurdish peshmerga.

Radio Updates 'Booty' From Fighting in Irbil

NC0703155995 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1516 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At midnight on the night of 6-7 March the Iraqi regime's forces attacked the defensive positions of Kurdistan's peshmerga in the (Guera) area of Irbil Governorate. After a heroic confrontation, the valiant peshmerga forces repulsed the enemy's attack and forced them to retreat with heavy losses in personnel and equipment. So far, our forces have seized the following booty in this battle:

1. Eight heavy guns were seized.
2. Eight vehicles of various types were captured.
3. Six (?Dimitov) and DShk machine guns were seized.
4. More than 100 Kalashnikov rifles were seized.
5. Two hundred RPG rounds plus a large quantity of artillery shells were seized.

Newspapers Cited Blaming U.S. for Attacks

NC0703121295 Paris AFP in English 1140 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Report by Farouk Choukri]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Baghdad, March 7 (AFP)—Iraq on Tuesday [7 March] accused the United States of stirring up an outbreak of fighting with Kurdish guerrillas to torpedo its attempts to win a lifting of UN sanctions.

Newspapers ran banner headlines accusing the Americans of "manipulating their agents in the north to carry out attacks on our army units."

A military communique said the army's 5th division had driven back an attack by fighters from Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two main parties in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq.

It said the PUK attacked the unit on Sunday night but was driven back and suffered several casualties.

Northern Iraq has been controlled by Kurds in defiance of Baghdad and with allied protection since an uprising after the 1991 Gulf War.

The army accused "members of the American intelligence service who went to the region in February" of instigating the Kurdish operation.

Iraq has denied reports from the Kurdish opposition that Saddam had massed his forces near the region controlled by the Kurds and that the forces were shelling Kurdish towns.

The United States "spreads fabricated reports and provokes problems aimed at diverting world public opinion from the suffering of the Iraqi people" every time the UN Security Council is due to review sanctions imposed on Baghdad after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the army said.

"We do not rule out the possibility of a continuation of these attacks in coming days. Our troops are in their defensive positions and have not crossed the lines" of the fighters, it added.

The Security Council is to hold its two-monthly review of sanctions on March 13, and Washington's UN ambassador Madeleine Albright said that the United States had mustered enough support to block any easing of sanctions, but would be prepared to use its veto if necessary.

President Bill Clinton had authorized her to state plainly that Washington would do its utmost to stop any "premature" move to allow Iraq to sell oil, she said.

France and Russia have been pressing for an end to the oil sanctions once the United Nations says Baghdad has met its post-Gulf War disarmament requirements.

But the US government insists that Baghdad must first comply with all UN resolutions. [passage omitted]

U.S. Attempts To 'Tarnish' Country's Position Seen

JN0803090495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Mar (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper has said the U.S. Administration was not successful this time in its choice of its media subject to tarnish Iraq's position. It is common knowledge that a bloody conflict has been raging for months between the agents in the autonomous region.

In an article today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: In this context, elements from U.S. intelligence in the autonomous region have used various means to instigate the agents, especially the followers of Talabani, to clash with some of our forward units. As a result, some of those followers clashed with two platoons of the Fifth Corps Regiments.

The paper notes that the U.S. Administration seeks to fabricate pretexts to maintain the blockade and cause great harm to the Iraqi people, especially when the Security Council debates the lifting or easing of the blockade.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The strange thing is that the U.S. Administration does not deal with the issue of the blockade in a manner that befits its role as a superpower that seeks to have unilateral sway over the world. Otherwise, what prompts this superpower to devote most of its time to look for ways to harm Iraq?

The paper adds: What encourages the U.S. Administration to persist in its arrogance and disdain in the way it treats the countries of the region—in spite of its dire need for these countries—is the devotion of the kings and amirs of oil, led by the Al-Sa'ud and Al-Sabah families, and their disgraceful ingratiation to their masters at the White House to protect their collapsing thrones.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying that it is time for the unfair blockade to end. The pretexts and excuses advanced by Albright will not hold water in view of the positive Iraqi stand toward the Security Council resolutions and the removal of all justifications for the blockade.

Tariq 'Aziz Urges UN To Lift Blockade

NC0703203895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Mar 93

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 7 Mar (MENA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has affirmed that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations to the UN Security Council and it is now the Security Council's turn to carry out its commitments to Iraq.

After meeting with the Security Council's current President, Chinese Ambassador Li Zhaoxing, 'Aziz told reporters that he had asked him to inform the Security Council members of this Iraqi position.

He added that his message to the Security Council explains that Iraq has implemented the major requirements connected with the economic blockade and noted that Ambassador Rolf Ekeus is due to hand in his report about the results of his mission in Iraq according to Part C of Security Council Resolution 687 and Resolution 715.

'Aziz pointed out that Iraq's fulfillment of its major relevant obligations gives it the right to expect that Paragraph 22 of Security Council Resolution 687 will be unconditionally implemented and this means lifting the blockade on Iraqi oil and other exports.

He added that Iraq hopes that the Security Council will seriously consider Iraq's request and that the relevant Council decision next month will reflect its legal obligations towards Iraq. He said that Iraq has carried out its obligations to the Security Council and it is now the latter's turn to fulfill its obligations to Iraq in line with its own resolutions.

The deputy prime minister explained that Iraq is not interested in selling its oil according to the formula set out in Resolution 706, noting that this offer was made in 1991 for political reasons, was actually a political plan to undermine domestic conditions in Iraq, and was not designed to ease the Iraqi people's hardships.

'Aziz added that the above offer was made in 1991 but this is now 1995. He said Iraq has implemented all the obligations outlined in Part C of UN Security Council Resolution 687 and has also agreed to Resolution 715. He noted that the weapons monitoring system is fully operational now.

He asserted that, in line with the foregoing, Iraq has a right to expect the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 in full, not just in part.

Tariq 'Aziz explained that Iraq is cooperating with the Special Committee to close all files, noting that it is doing this in a cooperative spirit and with good intentions.

He announced: I have extended an invitation to Ambassador Ekeus to visit Baghdad at the end of March to continue our cooperation and so that he can submit a clear report on 10 April, namely stating that the requirements specified in Part C of Resolution 687 and in Resolution 715 have been implemented in a satisfactory manner.

Responding to a question about the internal situation in Iraq, the deputy prime minister said: Anyone concerned about the situation in Iraq must visit Iraq. Foreign journalists, including American journalists, have affirmed that the situation in Iraq is stable. Our situation is even more stable than the situation in other countries that are supposed to be friends of the United States.

The deputy prime minister added: These new allegations are the kind to which Iraq has become accustomed. The aim of these allegations is to give a distorted impression to the UN Security Council every time the Council needs to review the blockade against Iraq.

Continuing, the deputy prime minister pointed out that this game has been repeated for the past four years, during which the U.S. sources and their agents in the region have claimed that they would topple the Iraqi Government within two months or that massive disturbances would take place within two months, etc. They have waited four years without being able to make good on their empty claims.

Asked about the allegations of U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, Tariq 'Aziz noted that the U.S. Administration tells the American people and the international community that the problem is not between the United States and Iraq, but between the Security Council and Iraq. He said: This allegation has been repeated for the past five years, as well as during my meeting with James Baker in Geneva before the war. Baker told me that the problem was between Iraq and the Security Council. But I told him that the meeting is between you and me and that neither the UN secretary general nor representatives of the international community are present.

The deputy prime minister said: We are facing the same story after five years. The United States is telling the world that regardless of the UN Security Council's feelings toward Iraq and its accomplishments, the United States will prevent the blockade from being lifted. This is a U.S. campaign against Iraq and not a dispute between the United Nations and Iraq. The American people and the international community should draw the appropriate conclusions from this stand. It is not a blockade imposed by the international community against Iraq. The U.S. administration wants to impose a unilateral blockade on Iraq as it does with Cuba. Therefore, the international community should draw its own conclusions.

Tariq 'Aziz added: It is meaningless for any country in Europe, Africa, Asia, or Latin America to impose a blockade on Iraq just because Washington wants it. This is a unilateral U.S. stand.

'Aziz added: Naturally, the United States enjoys the veto power in the Security Council. Let them use the veto and we will see what the reaction of the world community is. 'Aziz emphasized that it is premature to talk about an Iraqi reaction. He added: Instead, let us talk about the Iraqi action. Iraq's actions are in compliance with the Security Council resolutions. We have proved to the world that we are sincerely in compliance and wish to work with the world community on the basis of international law, respect for sovereignty, and respect for legitimate and mutual interests. We have proved this to several world countries, including some that took part in the alliance against Iraq in 1991. These countries now realize that Iraq is in full compliance and that Iraq is encouraging them to resume ties with it and to discuss the future of Iraq's bilateral and international relations.

'Aziz noted that if the United States insists on its stance, then it is up to the U.S. Government to answer the questions of the other countries and the world community in general. He added: I sincerely hope that the U.S. Administration will reconsider its stand. I have repeatedly told several U.S. figures that Iraq is not an enemy of the United States and that the U.S. Iraq policy is unjustified. We hope there will be a possibility of establishing normal relations with the United States, just as we have normal relations with the other states. If they insist on their stand, which runs contrary to the Security Council resolutions, let them face the world community.

Regarding the situation in northern Iraq, 'Aziz renewed the Cabinet's offer to the Kurdish leaders to begin a new chapter. He added: I repeat what the Cabinet has offered: We invite the Kurdish leaders to have a peaceful dialogue to find a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq, and we are still waiting for their reply. He added: I hope that this time the U.S. Government will not prevent a peaceful solution as it did in 1991, when it prevented the Kurdish leaders from travelling to Baghdad to reach a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish problem.

'Aziz noted that the Iraqi Administration was pulled out of northern Iraq in October 1991, and the region remained under the control of two armed groups and under the protection of a U.S. military umbrella disguised as the so-called "Operation Provide Comfort." He added: This arrangement has not been able to provide any comfort in northern Iraq in these past years, as all observers of the situation there attest. These two armed groups are fighting each other, the Turks attack Iraqi Kurdistan whenever they choose to, and the Iranians attack Kurdistan and kill the Kurds whenever they choose to.

'Aziz added: Since early 1994, the two main [Kurdish] groups have been constantly fighting each other. He stressed that the Iraqi Government has always offered a democratic and political solution for the Kurdish problem in Iraq, out of recognition of the Kurds' right to autonomy. He added: We recognized their right to participate in the government and in all the activities of Iraqi society. The fact is that Iraq is the only Middle Eastern country that recognizes the Kurds' right to autonomy, which is not recognized in Iran, Turkey, or Syria.

Daily: U.S. Policy 'Doomed to Failure'

JN0803110395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0805 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Mar (INA)—AL-JUMHURIYAH says that the U.S. resort to threats reiterates one important fact, namely, the U.S. Administration can no longer peddle its resolutions without objection or discussion at the Security Council, as was the case until 1994.

The paper adds, in an article written by its chief editor today, that French-Russian-Chinese rejection of the unjust U.S. political explanation of the Security Council resolutions means the siege is no longer viewed as a binding international resolution. This rejection views the U.S. explanation as a U.S. political stand, which greatly harms the Iraqi people and which conflicts with international law.

AL-JUMHURIYAH notes that the legal basis of the siege has been disproved and the international alliance against Iraq has collapsed. Thus, the task which aims at maintaining the siege is facing increasing resistance which—if America uses the veto—will turn into multilateral evasion of continued sanctions and into dealing with Iraq. This is because resorting to the veto means a major thing has happened, namely, that America rejects the stands of the other permanent members of the Security Council and prevents dialogue and agreements.

Concluding its article, AL-JUMHURIYAH asks: How long will the Americans continue a policy that depends on threats and lies? Even if they succeed for a while, they will be doomed to failure on the long run.

Iraqi-Syrian Relations Said 'Strained'

MM0803113095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Salih Qallab: "According to What Tariq 'Aziz Told an Arab Official Who Visited Baghdad Recently: Syrian Sand Barrier on Border With Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Well-informed Arab sources have stressed that no improvement has occurred in the strained relations between Syria and Iraq. In fact they have remained as tense as before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

According to these well-informed sources, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said in front of a senior Arab official who visited Baghdad a few days ago that the Syrians have set up a high sand barrier along the area that has witnessed active smuggling operations in recent years.

There is a prevalent belief that the area in question is situated toward Ab Kamal-'Anah. This area was a scene of smugglers' activities.

'Aziz stressed at the same meeting that no official contacts have been made between Syria and Iraq for a long time. And he denied that an Iraqi Foreign Ministry delegation headed by a senior official visited Damascus around mid-January, namely after the quadripartite summit held in Alexandria.

Unconfirmed reports had said that an Iraqi Foreign Ministry delegation made an undeclared visit to Damascus immediately after the quadripartite Alexandria summit. It was said then that Syria, which is concerned about the course of the peace process in the Middle East, was interested in using the card of improving relations with Iraq to put pressure on Israel and the United States.

What confirms the truth of what Tariq 'Aziz was reported to have said, namely that the deterioration in Syrian-Iraqi relations still exists and that there are no signs of a relaxation in these relations, is that Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam vehemently attacked Iraq and Iraqi policy in front of a Jordanian opposition delegation that visited Damascus early last month.

According to one member of this delegation, Syrian officials who received the Jordanian opposition delegation, including leaders of the Syrian Progressive National Front, said nothing, but confirmed that the deteriorating conditions between Syria and Iraq are still as they stand.

Rabin, Russia's Shumeyko Discuss Iran Connection

TA0703180195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister has expressed concern about Russia's connections with Iran, the source of the radical Islamic movement. Mr. Rabin told Vladimir Shumeyko, chairman of the Russian Federation Council, that Iran intends to obtain weapons of mass destruction. It is not clear whether it will achieve this goal within five years or 15 years, but it is clear that when they get there everybody will be in danger. The prime minister emphasized that the radical Islamic wave is spreading in the Arab world with Iran's support and is endangering the peace process.

Peres on Refugee Talks, Christopher Visit

TA0803070595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 8 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Karmit Gay on 8 March; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gay] This morning we asked Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres why Israel had agreed to discuss the displaced persons issue, which means the absorption of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the territories.

[Peres] First of all, a problem does not disappear merely because it is not discussed. We can ignore it, but it will not ignore us. Second, Israel undertook to discuss the issue on two or three occasions. The first time was at Camp David, where we pledged to set up the very committee that was established last night. The same formula—actually, the same wording—was repeated in the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. Thus, we have made a commitment, and commitments have to be adhered to.

[Gay] This seems to be one of the most central, most critical, and most vital issues in the conflict between us and the Palestinians.

[Peres] You are right.

[Gay] How has the situation changed from what it was two days ago?

[Peres] The situation today is the same as it was yesterday or two days ago, except that we need to establish a stricter framework. Unless we do, we are liable to become involved in issues we have not anticipated. The agenda concerns people who were displaced in 1967—actually, from the end of the war to the start of the population register, which took place in September 1967. We are discussing only those who came from Gaza and from Judaea and Samaria. If we discuss anything at all, it will be their return to the territories, not to the State of Israel. Yesterday they tried to introduce the right-of-return issue, but we rejected the attempt. They also tried to introduce quotes from a UN resolution, but we rejected that as well.

However, we do not know the exact number of these people. It is somewhere between 300,000 and 600,000, or a million—no one knows exactly, because this time, the discussion includes their offspring too. Furthermore, the number of those who actually wish to return is unclear, and despite the Palestinians' public statements, the absorption of these people is a crucial problem.

The task of these committees lies primarily in fact-finding [preceding word in English]: how many people, where they are at present, what their plans are, what their preferences regarding their future are, and so forth. The fact-finding will take time, and subsequently, we will decide how to deal with them.

[Gay] Secretary of State Warren Christopher is arriving tomorrow. What do we expect his visit to achieve?

[Peres] Look, we will make a serious and exhaustive effort to find out whether the Syrian issue can be reopened. The Syrian stands do not make much sense. What does al-Asad want? He wants Israel to announce—before the negotiations, before we even start discussing anything—that it will withdraw from the entire Golan Heights, that it will dismantle all the settlements, that it will not simply withdraw, but that it will withdraw to the June 1967 border, which is different from the international border.

[Gay] Is there any chance that Warren Christopher's visit will start a shift? Do you anticipate such a change?

[Peres] In my opinion, we should view every such meeting as if a chance exists. You lose nothing by anticipating.

Intelligence Chief: Christopher Comes Without 'Real Plans'

TA0703130195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief of Intelligence Major General Uri Sagi said that U.S. Secretary of State Christopher is coming to the region without any real plans, but based on the assumption that the visit itself will resuscitate the political process. Sagi estimates that no progress will be made because Damascus believes that the Americans cannot pressure the Israeli Government at the moment due to the political situation in the country. Gen. Sagi was addressing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that, among other issues, Gen. Sagi reported that there are Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] committees operating in Jordan that send instructions to their men in the Gaza Strip. The Jordanians are aware of it but do nothing about it, he said.

U.S. 'Very Troubled' on Iran, Syria

TA0703175695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Report by Yo'el Nir]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his remarks to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today Intelligence Chief Uri Sagi surveyed the Middle East arena, beginning with Syria.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is arriving in the region the day after tomorrow without any real plan and assuming that the very fact of his visit will inject life into the peace process. The Americans, the Intelligence chief said, are very troubled about the short timeframe before entering an election year in Israel. In contrast, al-Asad is not as troubled about the time factor as believed in Israel. It is clear to the Syrian president though that he will be unable to achieve what he could have achieved a year ago. He thinks that the Israeli Government has lost the momentum and the ability to reach an agreement with him.

As for the Golan itself, the Intelligence chief says, al-Asad will not put up with any blow to his honor; in other words, by his conditions, not a single Israeli citizen or soldier will remain on the Golan.

Another country which featured in Sagi's review was Iran. The Intelligence chief says we should fear its military buildup. According to Sagi, Iran will have a nuclear capability in 8 to 10 years, not three years, as leaked by cabinet ministers following the intelligence survey they heard at the beginning of the week. Here Major General Sagi observed that he was not sure if several of the cabinet ministers understood what they heard.

From Iran and the ministers, Sagi moved on to the Palestinians. Gaza, the Intelligence chief said, has turned into a target for the security forces. The Palestinian Authority is trying to reach an agreement with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad so that Gaza does not serve as a point of departure for terrorist activities.

As for displaced Palestinians, the Intelligence chief says there are apparently between 200,000 to 250,000 but the negotiations will last a long time since Israel's definitions are not acceptable to the Palestinians. For their part, the Palestinians talk of recognition of the right of return.

So much for the Intelligence chief's review at the Knessent Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. A discussion about the Intelligence Branch's national security review will take place in one of the this committee's subcommittees in the near future.

Beilin: Baraq's POST Comments Reflect Policy

TA0703175895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ehud Baraq says the Israeli Government should not implement the next stage in the accord with the Palestinians before Yasir 'Arafat strikes a deadly blow to the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. In an interview with THE WASHINGTON POST, Baraq said that 'Arafat is stronger than believed and he can operate against Hamas if he feels it is vital for him.

In a radio program this afternoon, Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin made it clear that Ehud Baraq's remarks are compatible with government policy.

PA Activities at Orient House Said To Lessen

TA0803093795 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Mar 95 p 2

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Seven Palestinian Authority [PA] institutions are operating in Jerusalem, in direct violation of the Oslo Accords, the Peace Watch group reported yesterday.

The group noted that the number of PA institutions operating in Jerusalem has increased since the Gaza/Jericho agreement was signed in Cairo in May, when there were three such institutions.

At the same time, "the diplomatic activity of the PA has radically diminished in Orient House, and the majority of high-level diplomatic meetings have taken place in Gaza," according to the report.

Orient House, the Palestinian Ministry of Religious Affairs, Palestinian Energy Center, Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, the Office of the Mufti, the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, and Palestinian Broadcasting Authority, are the seven PA offices operating in Jerusalem.

Government To Enact Law on PA Activity in Jerusalem

TA0803084495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza and the deputy mayor of Jerusalem have withdrawn their appeal to the High Court of Justice on the closure of the Orient House.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that the appellants' attorney withdrew the appeal after the state representative had declared that the government would act to implement the law on the prevention of PLO and Palestinian Authority [PA] activities in Jerusalem.

Bid To Stop British Visit to Orient House Confirmed

LD0803112895 London THE TIMES in English 8 Mar 95 p 11

[Report by Christopher Walker: "Israel Tries to Stop East Jerusalem Visit by British Minister"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem—The British Government has become embroiled in a diplomatic dispute with Israel, over the status of Jerusalem, on the eve of John Major's visit to Israel and the autonomous Gaza Strip due to begin on Sunday.

Israeli sources said yesterday that diplomatic representations had been made in an attempt to prevent a senior member of the Prime Minister's delegation, Douglas Hogg, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, from visiting Orient House, the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in annexed east Jerusalem.

In the meantime, senior Palestinian and Arab officials have been applying equal pressure on Whitehall to permit Mr Hogg's visit to the building, currently the office of Faysal al-Husayni, the senior PLO representative. They see such a visit as confirmation that Britain does not support Israel's annexation in 1967 of the Arab half of the holy city.

If Mr Hogg's visit proceeds as planned, it is expected to provoke fierce protests from Israel's right-wing opposition parties, which have repeatedly called on Yitzhaq Rabin's Labour Government to close down Orient House. The right-wing Hebrew paper HATZOFEH [as published] said yesterday that Britain had ignored Israeli representations and decided to go ahead with the visit.

But Richard Dalton, the British Consul-General in east Jerusalem, said yesterday that no decision had yet been taken. Referring all inquiries to London, he said that the British proposal had been "a subject for discussion (with the Israelis) in London".

The Israeli sources acknowledged that beyond diplomatic pressure, no measures could be imposed to prevent Mr Hogg's visit. Israel argues that as the British visitors are due to spend Tuesday in Gaza, where they will call on Yasir 'Arafat, the Palestinian Authority chief, the visit to Orient House was unnecessary.

Israeli sources indicated that one way of resolving the dispute might be to call Mr Hogg's trip a "courtesy visit", a tactic resorted to last month when three European Union Foreign Ministers, led by Alain Juppe of France, also insisted on visiting Orient House against the wishes of the Israeli Government.

Police Object to Palestinian Guard Actions in Bethlehem

TA0603124195 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Commander Moshe Mizrahi, commander of the Judaea Police District, has said that the Israel Police will allow no illegal body to operate in the Bethlehem area. He added that every complaint that locals file receives treatment similar to that given to Israeli complaints. He was reacting to an IDF Radio report that a civil guard has been operating in Bethlehem, equipped with tear gas and under the command of the Palestinian security service operating from Jericho. Our correspondent Hanan Schlein has the details:

The Palestinian security services are expanding their hold on Bethlehem. Over the past several months, the Palestinian security apparatuses have become the supreme authority for the Palestinian residents of the territories. They prefer to contact Fatah's or Jibril al-Rujub's offices instead of filing complaints with the Israeli police stations. This has further bolstered the status of the security apparatuses, which have recently stepped up their activities in Bethlehem. Over the past two weeks, the number of people who have filed complaints with the Palestinian security offices in the city has significantly increased, mainly in view of the wave of thefts in the area. Bayt Sahur businessmen have even begun sleeping in their shops.

The heads of Fatah and the security apparatus decided to launch regular patrols. They have been regularly dealing with violent incidents, thefts, and robberies about which they receive complaints. The presence of the plainclothes security persons was clearly visible during the festival of Id al-Fitr, when thousands of Palestinians celebrated on the streets of Bethlehem and no Israeli policeman was anywhere in sight. The Fatah youth stepped in and directed the traffic in the busy marketplace.

Netanyahu, Likud Revisit Jordan Peace Option

TA0703162395 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Mar 95 p B2

[Article by Orit Galili: "Netanyahu's Jordan Deal"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In view of the difficulties cropping up in the Oslo Accords, could the Jordanian option appear on the political agenda once again? Is the Likud considering an alternative to the Oslo plan in coordination with Jordan's monarchy, and is that the reason for the lively talks Binyamin Netanyahu has been conducting over recent months with Crown Prince Hasan and King Husayn? If the choice is Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or Fatah, then there are those who prefer Husayn, Netanyahu responds. But that option, he says, cannot exist as long as the Israeli Government makes Yasir 'Arafat the chief player.

Even if the Likud chairman does not say it in so many words, it seems that in recent months he has been examining whether the weakening of 'Arafat in the territories and Yitzhaq Rabin in Israel could lead to a deal—as Knesset Member 'Uzi Landau calls it—with Jordan for joint control in the territories. The Likud is once again raising that option because of recently resurfaced trends—as seen by the Likud—of residents of the territories being favorably disposed toward the Jordanian option.

In his meetings with King Husayn and Prince Hasan, Netanyahu was recently encouraged in his two basic assumptions: That the Jordanians regard an independent Palestinian state as an unbearable demographic threat—an outlook that of course suits the Likud doctrine—and that they oppose the confederation idea.

Netanyahu learned about the Jordanian opposition to the confederation idea from an interview Husayn gave in November 1994, and since then he has found out more about it in his talks with the monarch. The alternative option claims that the Jordanians will ultimately receive responsibility for Palestinian autonomous enclaves in the West Bank. But, is Jordan—not the PLO—on the West Bank historically feasible at all following the Oslo accords? The Likud chairman's political ideas, which are based on the Jordanian option, were recently bolstered after he learned about new moods among residents in the territories. Netanyahu claims that since the implementation of the Oslo Accords the Palestinians in Gaza are facing a huge mess while they see an orderly state in Jordan. There are also many family ties between Jordan and Gaza and they might help turn the idea into reality.

These are only some of the reasons for returning to the Jordanian option. Dr. Dore Gold, of Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Studies, who is Netanyahu's adviser, points to more substantive motives. Several weeks ago, at a European conference, Gold saw public opinion polls conducted in Nabulus recently by Dr. Khalil Shiqaqi, a lecturer at al-Najah University and the owner of a public opinion institute. The polls show a rise in support for the Jordanian option in the territories. In these polls, the Palestinians were asked two questions: Do you prefer an independent Palestinian state? Do you prefer the territories being linked to Jordan? Between 40 and 50 percent support a link to Jordan. There was a rise in support for that option during the autumn months, although there has temporarily been a downward trend due to the struggle over Jerusalem between the PLO and Jordan.

The Likud chairman's ideas are based on this data, among other things. In the four years since the Madrid Conference, Gold has been holding ongoing contacts with representatives of the Arab states and the Palestinians at conferences in the United States and Europe. The contents of these meetings, which are mainly businesslike, are handed over to the Likud chairman for his consideration. Gold frequently presents the Likud's ideas at these meetings to show that they should not be discarded as just weak theories and to test Arab reaction.

According to the Likud's current thesis, if the approach of the two sides to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation has been ideological up to now—that is now changing. While the inhabitants of the territories were committed to Yasir 'Arafat as a symbol, since he came to the Gaza Strip that icon has been cracked. While he is still considered important ideologically, the Likud says, the pragmatic approach is gaining ground in the territories and the residents ask themselves what will happen next. Can 'Arafat come up with the answers?

Gold suggests food for thought: What would a Nabulus resident do with $10,000. Would he deposit it in a bank in Gaza or in the Jordanian bank in Nabulus? Today, Netanyahu believes, the residents of the territories are no longer busy with the question of who meets their national aspirations. The issue on the agenda is who is capable of dealing with day-to-day problems. And if that is the issue, then it will be possible to bring Jordan into the picture since when the pragmatic approach takes over in the territories, then the Jordanian option will become realistic. Currently, Netanyahu claims—especially to those who ridicule his plan and note that it does not have a partner on the other side—no Arab is prepared to stand up publicly and declare that he agrees to receive less than an independent state and the division of Jerusalem.

We can learn about another aspect of the Likud chairman's pragmatism from his attitude toward the Gaza issue. In talks with close aides, Netanyahu says he is not a formalist and is prepared to regard Gaza as the Palestinian state "because that is actually what it is." On the West Bank, on the other hand, he will not give the PLO a foothold. But can we assume from that that in the future—if and when the second stage of the Oslo accord is implemented—Netanyahu will not adopt a more realistic approach over the West Bank? Netanyahu deliberately avoids direct answers, but it seems that the difference between him and Labor members who support ideas raised by Shim'on Peres in closed rooms—that Gaza should be regarded as the sole Palestinian entity alongside the State of Israel—is not so great.

That outlook is due to the fact that the PLO is no longer considered a sovereign neighbor alongside the State of Israel. In reference to the other territories, Peres refers to confederation with Jordan.

But the really great hope the Likud is currently cultivating is to bring Husayn back into the arena without a need for a confederation. That will happen, they say, when the Palestinian Authority will no longer be able to provide a basic standard of living for the residents of the territories, and in fact, they claim, that is already happening. In such a reality, the chances of introducing the Jordanian element into the West Bank will improve. On the other hand, Netanyahu is smart enough to know that if the Palestinians do not turn to Jordan in their desperation, the Jordanians will definitely not initiate the move. Jordan will enter the West Bank only if asked. King Husayn, 'Uzi Landau says, will not act as long as he is not certain that Israel is the boss and the PLO is no longer in the picture. Jordan wants to make sure that it is not facing an independent source of power.

Landau believes that if the Likud returns to power that scenario could come about. He adds that at this point in time, in view of the crisis over the Oslo accord, nobody—either on the right or the left—has a real political solution.

Sources Note Normalization 'Difficulties' With Jordan

TA0703131395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Mar 95 p 6

[Report by Hemi Shalev, 'Ada Kohen, and Raviv Drucker]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, the Jordanian deputy prime minister and education minister, said that Jordan would not normalize ties with Israel in the field of education because the "Arab culture is deeper than the Hebrew culture, which is empty and incomprehensive."

Al-Rawabidah's statements which were published in AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT generated surprise in Jerusalem. Sources in the Israeli capital, however, confirmed reports of widespread Jordanian opposition to rapid normalization between the two countries, and of difficulties encountered by the Israeli diplomats trying to become settled there. Among other things, reports have reached Jerusalem complaining about the meager participation at receptions given by the Israeli legation and difficulties in arranging meetings with Jordanian officials. It was also reported that many landlords in Amman refuse to rent their properties to the Israeli Embassy or the ambassador. [passage omitted]

Jordan's al-Dhuwayb Sees Possible Problems in Trade

TA0703123495 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Mar 95 p 15

[Report by Tzvi Zinger]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "The conduct of some Israeli tourists in Jordan could jeopardize the peace and strengthen the opponents of peace in my country. Such conduct, if it continues, could lead to the closing of all touristic sites in Jordan to Israelis."

This warning was made by Muhammad al-Dhuwayb, Jordan's minister of economics and welfare [title as published], who is currently visiting the village of Za'tarah in the Bethlehem District. "What happened at Aaron's Tomb very seriously hurt our sensitivity," the minister said. "Moses and Aaron are not only sacred to you, but also to us."

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 7 March adds that, while addressing Reformed Movement rabbis in Jerusalem today, "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin once again denounced the conduct of some Israeli tourists in Jordan, the vandalizing of Aaron's Tomb, and hotel thefts, and said he hoped Jordan's police would deal with these people."]

The Jordanian minister, who arrived to pay a private visit to relatives in the village, is also in charge of the Petra area. Yesterday he conferred with Rabbi Moshe Leibovich, head of the ultra-Orthodox settlement of Betar 'Ilit in the 'Etzyon Bloc. [passage omitted]

Not everything the Jordanian minister had to say was pleasing to Israeli ears. In his meeting with Rabbi Leibovich he warned about the trade imbalance between Israel and Jordan. "It might cause problems to the peace," he said.

"All the Arab countries today accept Israel as one of the countries in this region, and this has huge significance," the minister said. "However, Israel, too, must change its attitude toward the Palestinians. Any delay in the implementation of the Oslo agreement might affect the peace and make more people in the West Bank who are hesitant in their support of the peace join the ranks of the opposition. The agreement must be implemented as soon as possible, or else the peace will be affected."

Sne on Hizballah, Israeli Investments in South Lebanon

TA0703162795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah invests nearly $100 million in southern Lebanon each year in an effort to win the hearts of the southern Lebanese residents. This was disclosed by Health Minister Efrayim Sne during a tour of the security zone. Minister Sne announced that Israel invests large sums of money in civilian projects in southern Lebanon in order to prevent Hizballah from gaining control of the residents there. Our correspondent Nati Zilberman reports that the minister toured SLA [South Lebanese Army] positions and examined the operation of hospitals and medical facilities in the security zone.

Tunisia Asks To Hold Off on Interests Offices Deal

TA0703165295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tunisia has asked Israel to hold off sending the head of the Israeli Interests Office to his post in Tunis.

Israeli officials hope the delay will only be for a few weeks. There has also been a delay in the arrival of a Tunisian technical team on setting up an interests office in Israel.

The official reason is that the team is not ready yet.

'Security Source' Says Government Will Not Sign NPT

TA0703171195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel is unimpressed by Egyptian threats not to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] or by Iranian promises that it will sign. According to a senior security source, both countries know they will lose important nuclear equipment and technological aid if they end their current participation in the NPT. Discussions on the renewal of the treaty are scheduled to begin in New York next.month. Israel, however, has made it clear it will not sign the treaty, at least for the time being. With more on the issue, reporter Alan Ben-'Ami:

[Begin Ben-'Ami recording] Egypt has been waging a vigorous campaign to get Israel to sign the NPT, threatening to end its own participation in the NPT and to get other countries to do the same if Israel does not join the club. But a knowledgeable Israeli source says the issue is not so black and white. First of all, if a majority of 85 current signatories to the treaty decide it should be renewed when they meet in New York next month, then all 165 present signatories, including Egypt, are automatically committed to continue to abide by the treaty. Treaty participants agree not to develop, produce, test, or acquire nuclear weapons and to renounce possession of them. But signing the NPT allows them to acquire nuclear plants, technology, and knowhow for civilian use—which may explain why countries like Iraq and Iran eagerly signed the NPT in the past—and any signatory which renounces the treaty will have free access to further aid, equipment, or technology cut off and become liable for inspection of existing nuclear facilities. For all these reasons, says the Israeli source, signatories to the NPT are unlikely to end their participation so quickly.

As for Israel, it remains firm in its present refusal to sign the treaty for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the NPT has never deterred or prevented ruthless regimes like Iraq from signing the treaty and clandestinely acquiring or building nuclear weapons. Iran, another NPT signatory, is widely considered to be on the road to nuclear weapons capability, and until widespread regional peace agreements or arrangements are reached, Israel will continue to face existentialist threats of conventional and nonconventional weapons from one quarter or another.

In addition, the Israeli official says, Israel has already had negative experience of promises and expectations from joining international arms control agreements. Two years ago, says the official, American and European leaders urged Israel to sign the Chemical Warfare Convention [CWC] banning the use of chemical weapons. Israel was told that if it agreed to sign other Arab countries would do likewise. In addition, an early agreement to sign would allow Israel to participate in formulating rules and regulations for the convention. We signed, said the official, not one Arab country followed in our wake. (?Members) in both the Asian and European groups involved in formulating the CWC refused to allow us to sit with their groups when they began meeting. It was a bitter lesson. [end recording]

[In a report on the NPT issue on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 7 March, army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe adds that "the defense establishment has confirmed that the maneuvers by the navies of regional countries will take place near Tunisia at the end of March and will last three days, despite denials by several Arab countries."]

House Committee Discusses U.S. Congress Debt Decision

JN0803081295 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The House of Representatives' Financial Committee met today and discussed with interest reports from Washington regarding the decision by the U.S. Congress Appropriations Committee to reduce the second installment of Jordanian debt to $50 million instead of $275 million.

The committee has discerned that this approach is contrary to Jordanian expectations and U.S. officials' promises, particularly that of President Bill Clinton, to exempt Jordan of all its debt due to America within three years.

The committee stressed that such an approach, if adopted by the U.S. Congress, will affect the continuation of the peace process, the credibility of the United States' support for peace in the Middle East, and its sponsorship of the peace process. In light of this, the House of Representatives' Financial Committee hopes that the U.S. Congress will reexamine the decision of the Appropriation Committee and respect the promises and pledges the U.S. officials have made to support the Jordanian economy by writing off debts and increasing Jordan's annual aid share.

On the occasion of his tour of the region, the committee called on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to reiterate the U.S. Government's promises to write off Jordan's debts.

Paper Criticizes Israel Stand at Amman Meeting

JN0803095795 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 8 Mar 95 pp 1, 19

[Editorial: "All Parties Should Enjoy Gains of Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] During the meeting of the four-way committee on displaced people held in Amman yesterday, it was clear that two different languages were spoken by two conflicting parties. The first is an Arabic language—Jordanian, Palestinian, and Egyptian—which deals with international legitimacy, human rights, principles, and charters. These are not controversial and are not subject to discussion. They deal with the displaced Palestinians' right to repatriation. The second language is an Israeli language which deals with Israeli legitimacy and concepts that conflict with human rights.

Observers at the Amman meeting easily discovered that the three Arab parties called for agreements on practical measures to allow the displaced to return and to help the deportees restore their basic rights, namely, the right of people to exist on their soil. Meanwhile, the Israeli side wants to define the problem as if it has not been defined yet and to discuss the issue as if the issue can tolerate more discussion, now that many international resolutions have been adopted and agreements have been reached to this effect between Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Israel.

Shim'on Peres spoke in the meeting about what he termed a solution imposed on one party which cannot be accepted by another party. Such unconvincing talk does not reflect good intentions or responsible feelings, but instead reflects an Israeli desire to waste time. This desire conflicts with Security Council Resolution 237, the Palestinian-Israeli declaration, the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, and the agreements signed between Egypt and Israel.

The members of the four-way committee met to find the best and easiest measures to permit the return of the Palestinian displaced and deportees with dignity and in accordance with international charters and treaties. If such a thing does not take place, the whole peace process will end in a way that returns things to square one. Peace will be meaningless if the displaced Palestinians, who were forced by war to leave their homes, do not return to their homeland. Disasters will continue if Israel continues its settlement policy by seizing Palestinian lands and replacing Palestinians with settlers on these lands. Thus, the gains of such a peace will be enjoyed by one party—Israel—while the negative results will be the lot of the other parties, particularly the Palestinian and Jordanian sides who are directly involved in the issue of displaced.

Al-Hariri Leaves for Talks With Syrian Officials

NC0603203895 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left for Damascus tonight where he will meet Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam for consultations on the latest developments.

Returns From Damascus

NC0703142295 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri returned to Beirut today following a two-day visit to Syria. During the visit the prime minister met Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and discussed with him the latest developments in the south and the visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Fadlallah Reiterates Opposition to U.S. Policies

NC0803081495 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has said: We are still daily facing the U.S. intelligence service, which, allied with the Israeli intelligence service and with several intelligence services at home and abroad, is planning to assassinate leading influential Islamist leaders and preparing to detonate timebombs and booby-trapped vehicles in the areas inhabited by the oppressed. The latest piece of work by the U.S.-Israeli alliance was probably a recent explosion in Sfayr [southern suburb], which claimed the lives of innocents, the young and other civilians.

Speaking to our radio on the 10th anniversary of the ugly massacre perpetrated by the Americans, Zionists, and their agents against innocent people in B'ir al-'Abid [when a car bomb went off], Fadlallah said: We hear the U.S. President discuss the campaign against terrorism and we ask: What terrorism is he fighting? Against what terrorism is he inciting the world media? What terrorism is he trying to rally the world to confront? Is there any terrorism harsher than this?

His eminence added: We adopt every U.S. slogan on human rights and [word indistinct] on the freedom of man, but we adopt them because they are our principles. He said: The United States did not denounce the B'ir al-'Abid crime, because it was scheming with Israel to suppress the oppressed. We say that we continue to oppose U.S. policy everywhere. No threat or menace can deter us and no [word indistinct] attempt will make us stop our work, for the sake of our nation and freedom.

Ayatollah Fadlallah said there is a difference between those working to liberate man and those working to enslave him. He said this is the difference between the Islamists and non-Islamists who oppose U.S. policy and U.S. policy when it confronts its opponents.

Reportage on Activities in Southern Region

Israeli Shelling, 'Resistance' Attack

NC0603090295 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Zionist naval blockade of the southern coast is continuing amid the enemy's escalated attacks on villages. The enemy navy continues to fire at fishing boats whenever fishermen try to do their work on the high seas.

The occupation forces escalated their acts of aggression yesterday evening. Shortly after 1800 yesterday, they bombarded the army's empty barracks in al-Nabatiyah, many neighborhoods in al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, and the outskirts of Kafr Rumman with 155-mm shells from al-Zaffatah position.

At 1930, the occupation forces in Bra'shit and (?Muhaybib) directed artillery fire at the outskirts of [name indistinct], Bra'shit, and 'Ayta al-Jabal.

Shortly after 2030, the suburbs of [name indistinct] came under 155-mm artillery fire from the enemy post in Yarin. At approximately 1200, helicopters flew over Kafra and Yatar and reached as far as the Tyre coast. Zionist boats have not been absent from the Tyre coast. They continue to prevent fishermen from sailing and use their floodlights to search for them at night.

Yesterday morning, the occupation forces fired at boats which tried to break the blockade and go to sea to earn their living. None of the fishermen was hurt and they returned to the shore, leaving their nets at sea.

Machine-gun fire was heard at sea off Tyre at dawn today. It is not yet known whether the fire was directed against the fishermen or a [word indistinct] to scare them.

Shelling with 81- and 120-mm artillery was reported directed at the outskirts of al-Mansuri town at dawn today, originating from the enemy position in (al-Hardawn). The enemy forces in this position raked nearby valleys after illuminating the area with flares.

In retaliation for Zionist attacks on peaceful citizens in villages along the occupied strip, a support unit of the Islamic Resistance at 0630 today pounded the enemy post in Bi'r Kallab, scoring direct hits. Shortly after 0700, the Iqlim al-Tuffah hills and the suburbs of 'Ayn Bu Siwar and Jarju' came under 155-mm artillery shelling from the enemy post in al-Zaffatah. The intermittent shelling is still in progress.

Elsewhere, Islamic resistance sources affirmed that one of its groups discovered an explosive charge on the (?Bra'shit) road this morning as it was on patrol in the area. The device had been planted by a Zionist unit overnight. The resistance's engineering unit dismantled it.

More Israeli Shelling

NC0703180995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An enemy reconnaissance MK airplane accompanied by other aircraft flew over towns and villages in the central and western sectors and al-Litani River basin from Qa'qa'iyat al-Jisr down to al-Qasimiyah Bridge. These overflights coincided with large-scale raking of the western sector's valleys and woods and the outskirts of Bra'shit and Shaqra towns.

The occupation forces artillery on (al-Hardawn) Hill in the western sector bombarded the outskirts of al-Qulaylah, al-Mansuri, al-Hinniyah, al-'Izziyah, and Majdal Zun towns with several 105-mm shells. The shelling was accompanied by heavy 12.7-mm machine-gun fire.

The occupation artillery on the hills of Rshaf, Humayyid, Blat, and Haddathah bombarded Kafra, Yatar, Haris, 'Ayta al-Jabal, and Haddathah towns with 81- and 82-mm shells. The enemy artillery also fired several rounds on Mlikh, al-Luwayzah, Nab' al-Tasah basin, and Jabal al-Rafi' in Iqlim al-Tuffah followed by concentrated shelling of Jabal al-Rafi', al-Jabal al-Akhdar, Sujud, and al-Wadi al-Akhdar basin. The eastern neighborhood of Kafr Tibnit Town came under shelling and machine-gun fire causing the town's public school to close down. [passage omitted]

Ambassador Khalil Makkawi, deputy head of the Lebanese negotiating delegation, said: Israel has accustomed us to escalating its operations whenever U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher begins a tour of the region. By doing so it wants to divert his attention from the essential [goal] of the visit and turn him to a man whose job is to extinguish fires and dispel clouds.

He noted that the United States has given Israel the green light to blockade the Lebanese southern coast. He expressed his belief that there will be no Lebanese complaint to the U.N. Security Council because the United States is ready to prevent the council from convening or even from issuing anything denouncing or deterring Israel.

[Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1715 GMT on 7 March adds: "A number of Katyusha rockets fell in the al-'Ayishiyah and al-Rayhan areas in Jazzin at noon today."]

Hizballah Claims Attack on Lahd Forces

NC0803065395 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0630 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our security correspondent informed us a short time ago that the resistance men last night clashed with a Lahd forces patrol and wounded one of its men. The clash took place in the Shihin area in the western sector of the occupied strip. A patrol member was hurt, as we have already noted.

Our security correspondent said that this morning the resistance men attacked Taw'amat Niha in the Jazzin area, using artillery and machine guns.

In Beirut a short time ago, Hizballah declared its responsibility for a clash with a Lahd patrol. A statement issued by Hizballah said the attack left three Lahd militiamen wounded.

SLA Claims To Repulse Attack

NC0803083495 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Terrorists tried to attack the South Lebanese Army [SLA] Taw'amat, Jazzin post this morning, using machine guns and rockets. But the post garrison immediately opened fire and repulsed the attack, forcing the terrorists to retreat. The terrorists shelled the post to cover their retreat.

The shelling originated from the outskirts of Mashgharah and 'Ayn al-Tinah, which came under accurate and concentrated shelling from the SLA artillery.

The attacks caused no casualties among the SLA soldiers and there is no information about losses in the terrorists ranks.

At 0800 today the terrorists also renewed their shelling of the same post in Taw'mat, Jazzin, but there were no casualties.

In the western sector, a SLA soldier was wounded in a clash with the terrorists near Shihin. The SLA searched the area and found belongings left by the terrorists and bloodstains, thus confirming that they suffered casualties.

Paper: Christopher Tour 'Different' From Prior Trips

JN0803111695 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0850 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Mar (SANA)—AL-THAWRAH newspaper has said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's current tour of the region is different from his previous tours in many ways, particularly with regard to the accumulation of the obstacles and impediments placed by Israel in the way of the peace process.

In an article today in the "Together on the Road" column by Fayiz al-Sa'igh, director general of the Syrian Arab News Agency, SANA, the newspaper accuses Israel of obstructing the peace process through equivocation sometimes, putting pressure on the U.S. Administration at other times, and committing flagrant aggression against southern Lebanon most of the time.

AL-THAWRAH adds that despite optimism about achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region—which is impossible under the conditions created by Israel for the peace process—the stops of Christopher are full of contradictions and misfortunes instead of achievements. The paper refers here to the obstacles facing the Oslo accord and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The paper says that regarding the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, the discussion is not as naive and simple as Christopher might find elsewhere. Peace has conditions and laws and a very clear formula that stipulates exchanging land for peace in accordance with resolutions that everybody, except for Israel, knows by heart. Israel is still placing obstacles in the path of peace. Christopher should remove these obstacles [words indistinct].

The paper says the situation in Syria is completely different. No one can drag Syria into anything it does not want. Syria by itself embraces justice and equality in security and peace [word indistinct] restoration of territories.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH expresses optimism about achieving a just and comprehensive peace. This is because the long U.S. patience is wearing thin and the U.S. Administration is firmly resolved to adopt serious stands to face attempts to obstruct the peace process. It is also determined to shoulder its responsibilities and international role without bias and partiality in accordance with justice and equality sought by all nations.

TISHRIN Reiterates Peace 'Strategic Option'

JN0803084495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 8 Mar 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, TISHRIN says occupation is the cause of tension and turmoil. If not for occupation, the region would not have suffered the agonies and tragedies of war.

The paper adds: Syria has repeatedly stressed that peace is its strategic option. It has also reiterated its eagerness to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. This is because a true peace must be based on full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, the Golan, southern Lebanon, and Jerusalem. This peace must also guarantee the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people to their territory, including their right to repatriation and self-determination.

TISHRIN further says that peace must give each party its rights and usher in a new era of stability in the region. Removing occupation is a sine qua non for peace. Syria's participation in the Madrid peace conference paved the way for a just and comprehensive peace that restores rights and territories, the paper says.

The paper concludes: While sharpening its resolve on the March revolution anniversary and adhering to the constant principles and foundations of justice and right, Syria will never be dragged behind deceitful, misleading arguments and will not yield to pressures that seek to make it abandon its principled positions.

Talas Receives Russian Deputy Defense Minister

JN0803100895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas; deputy commander in chief of the Army and the Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and minister of defense, this afternoon received General Constantine Ivanovich Kobets, deputy defense minister in the Russian Federation and his accompanying delegation.

The meeting was attended by Lieutenant General 'Ali Aslan, deputy chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, a number of senior General Command officers, and the ambassador of the Russian Federation in Damascus.

Talks dealt with bilateral relations between the two countries' armies and ways to promote these relations in a manner that serves the interests of the two friendly states, Syria and the Russian Federation.

The guest general and his accompanying delegation arrived in Damascus yesterday afternoon for an official visit to the Syrian Arab Republic that will last for several days.

Radio Views Amman Statement on Refugee Problem

JN0803082295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Meetings of the quadrilateral committee on the status of displaced Palestinians were concluded in Amman yesterday evening. The committee comprises the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, as well as a representative of the limited self-rule authority.

A final statement was issued following the meetings. The statement did not speak about any specific mechanism for the repatriation of the displaced. It also did not openly speak about the international laws that assert this right. Instead, the statement noted that the ministerial meeting adopted the Oslo agreement and its annexes, the Wadi al-'Arabah treaty between Jordan and Israel, and the Camp David accords.

The final statement also disregarded the right of return. It did not even mention the word return at all. The statement said the meetings were meant to agree on the modalities of admission of the Palestinians displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, while observing the necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder, as the statement put it.

The final statement noted the formation of a technical committee that comprises three permanent members from each side. The committee may seek the help of experts. The committee will meet every three weeks. Its first meeting will be a month from now, while the ministerial committee will meet once every two or three months. The statement did not set a deadline for the end of these meetings or for reaching specific results. It only said the continuing ministerial committee will discuss relevant confidence-building measures, but also failed to specify the nature of these measures.

IRNA, SANA Officials Urge Joint Cooperation

LD0703122295 Tehran IRNA in English 1128 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, March 7, IRNA—The visiting Deputy Managing Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) Mohammad Hasan Ja'fari here Monday [6 March] underlined the need for the formation of a joint front by the Islamic countries for dissemination of news in order to confront the Zionist propaganda against Islamic states. Ja'fari, currently here to inspect the Syrian news agency and cultural institutions, in a meeting with editor-in-chief of the Syrian daily 'AL-BA'TH' Turki Siqar, added that by having religious and cultural common views, Muslim countries can have joint cooperation in propagation field.

Stressing IRNA's mission in giving coverage to news pertaining to the Palestinian occupied lands and south Lebanon, he outlined the policy of the news agency to confront western cultural assualt.

Appreciating Iran's support for the Palestinian cause, Siqar praised Iran's support for the Palestinian cause. He further underlined the need for Iranian and Syrian mass media to cooperate in publicity field to foil Zionist propaganda campaign and voiced his organization's readiness to cooperate in this regard.

Meanwhile, Ja'fari in a meeting with director general of the Syrian News Agency (SANA), Fayiz Sayigh referred to the commonalities between the two countries and underlined the need to promote bilateral cooperation in field of news.

Pointing to Zionist plots to tarnish the images of the two countries, he stressed that a joint publicty strategy would provide appropriate ground for confront such conspiracies.

Commenting on the west's cultural assault against Islamic values, the IRNA deputy managing director reiterated that strengthening the union of Islamic and regional news agencies and using modern communication technologies was the only way to confront the assault.

Referring to the existing grounds for initiating joint news cooperation, Sayigh underlined that the friendly relations between Iran and Syria would pave the way for defending the rights of the oppressed people of Palestine.

Afghanistan

Taleban Leader Says Government Plane Destroyed

LD0703170195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of the Taleban group said today that during battles between the Taleban and the forces of Isma'il Khan, a government aircraft was destroyed.

Furthermore, according to the Taleban spokesman, during battles between Taleban and the forces of Isma'il Khan, who is an ally of Borhanoddin Rabbani, an aircraft belonging to Isma'il Khan's forces was destroyed.

Mazari's Men Launch Missile Attack on Kabul

LD0703172495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol Ali Mazari's men today subjected Kabul city to missile attacks, as a result of which 30 residents were martyred.

Quoting a security source, the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reports that the most serious incident during the day occurred in the region of the Panjsad family, where a cluster missile landed. As a result 25 innocent local people were martyred and a number of them were injured.

In retaliation to these missiles attacks, air and artillery forces of the Islamic army subjected the positions of Mazari's group to heavy attacks, as a result of which a number of their trenches and positions were destroyed and dozens of their men were killed.

Yesterday the Islamic army began an operation to destroy Mazari's missiles firing positions. During the last two days, the air force has taken an active part in destroying Mazari's positions.

The military officials say that more than 20 [military] posts belonging to Mazari located in various parts of western Kabul have been captured by the Islamic army forces. The morale of Mazari's men is very low and they have retreated from their front lines. [passage indistinct] Kabul hospital sources estimate that 90 people have been injured as a result of missiles fired by Mazari.

Dostam Forces Capture Kabul's Chelhsaton Palace

LD0803122595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] War still continues in the west and southwest of the Afghan capital, Kabul. Afghanistan's Unity Party spokesman in Peshawar, announcing the news before noon today, added: The forces of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, head of the Supervisory Council, and the forces of 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf's Islamic Alliance Party have attacked the positions and regions under the control of the Unity Party in western Kabul, but have been confronted by the severe resistance of the Islamic Unity Party forces and have been forced to withdraw while sustaining heavy casualties.

The spokesman also added: The Islamic Unity Party forces and the forces under the control of 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the Islamic National Movement, early this morning in an attack have managed to liberate Chehlsaton Palace in Kabul.

With the intensification of clashes in Kabul, the United Nations has expressed concern over the current conflicts in Kabul, calling for the establishment of a cease-fire.

Islamic Unity Party Threatens Government

LD0803111295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Attacks by Afghan government forces and Sayyaf's Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union Party] on the positions of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] and residential areas in the west of Kabul still continue.

According to a Central News Unit report from Islamabad, an Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman has reported advances by government forces in the Dasht-e Barchi and Qala-ye Qazi areas. Independent sources have not confirmed the advances by government forces in the west of Kabul.

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami has threatened that if the attacks by government ground and air forces on the west of Kabul are not halted they will fire missiles on Kabul's military and government areas.

The UN special representative for Afghan affairs has called for a cease-fire in Kabul. According to hospital sources in Kabul more than 30 were killed and at least 90 injured in yesterday's clashes.

India

Article Appraises Clinton Foreign Policy

BK0703133395 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 7 Mar 95 p 8

[Article by J.N. Dixit: "A mid-term appraisal"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The period May 1994 to January 1995 has been characterised by much diplomatic and political interaction between the United States and India. The Clinton-Rao meeting in Washington in May 1994 was the central impulse to this process. We have had Energy Secretary O'Leary, Defence Secretary Perry and Commerce Secretary Brown visit us over the last four months. There are reports that Mrs Clinton would come in March. India seems to have appeared on President Clinton's foreign policy radar screen and is becoming a focus of attention. Our Finance Minister, Commerce Minister, Air Chief and a number of senior officials have visited the US during this period. There is a positive orientation both in content and range in Indo-US relations.

While there is reason to be satisfied with the current trends in Indo-US relations, it is obvious that these relations are not structured, or developed in a purely bilateral context. There is an expanding concentric ambience in regional and global terms which impinges on Indo-US relations. In the Asian and Eurasian areas, the US has a stable strategic and political equation with the countries in South-East Asia and on the Pacific rim, barring China and North Korea. Despite undercurrents of differences on economic matters, the US has stabilised relations in this respect with these countries through continuous bilateral discussions and through evolving multilateral arrangements like the APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation]. The US is a partner in collective security arrangements being put in place for this region. It is in Central Asia, West Asia and the Gulf that US priorities are being defined in a problematic context.

The US does not want any revival of strategic or operational influence of Russia in the Central Asian Republics. At the same time, it would like to prevent the forces of Islamic fundamentalism from capturing the power structures of these States. The US is [words indistinct] in Central Asian politics. So the policy orientation, through not overtly expressed, is to work in tandem with Russia in this region while influencing the Russian power structure to move away from any plans of reviving their dominance of the region. In relation to Iran, the attitude is hostile to the current regime, and the objective is to prevent it from taking advantage of its ethno-religious, geographical and cultural linkages for becoming influential in Central and West Asia. One wonders whether the calibrated politico-military policy of stopping short of the total destruction of Saddam Husayn and his government in Iraq, is a reflection of this element in US policy. The importance of countries of the Gulf, both economically and strategically, to the US is obvious, needing no detailed analysis or explanation. Equally, the strategic importance of Israel for the US on the Eastern littoral of the Mediterranean and the North- Western Axis of the Asian land mass needs no emphasis. Access to natural resources of the Gulf and strategic influence in the area are continuing motivations in US foreign and defence policies. This, in turn, is the basis of the importance that the US attaches to Pakistan. Despite the genuine concerns about Pak nuclear intentions and basic differences on this issue, Pakistan on the eastern flank of the Gulf and the southern flank of Central Asia and Iran, is and will remain a desirable ally for the US.

Though the politics of the three countries and the negative attitude of two of them towards Israel have inner contradictions, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan constitute points of the strategic triangle which the US nurtures for its security interests. It is also to be noted that in the post-Gulf War period, the US policy in the Gulf and West Asia is to ensure an equilibrium in the relative economic and military power of all the countries in the region in a manner that no state in the area is permitted to acquire such power which may overwhelm their neighbours and result in their dominance of the countries of the region by one of them. The cascade effect of this logic applies to India also. While the US acknowledges the existing status and potentialities of India, it would be a verse to its potentialities reaching levels of power and influence which would erode the overall objectives mentioned above.

Moving on to global dimensions of US foreign and defence policies, it would be relevant to recall a public opinion poll of US citizens on foreign policy priorities conducted by US media in the last quarter of 1994. The poll results were brought out in the magazine SPAN in October-November 1994. The US public gave the highest priority to "employment", "protection of US domestic economy" and "access for US goods to foreign markets" in US foreign relations. Secretary of State Warren Christopher giving an overall survey of US foreign policy objectives to media in Washington in the fourth week of December 1994 stated that encouragement of free market forces, democracy and access to required inputs from abroad for strengthening US economy constituted the primary objectives. He added that non-proliferation and elimination of weapons of mass destruction combined with continued action to prevent the further emergence of centres of such military power remain fundamental elements in American foreign policy. He asserted that this is essential to fashion a stable international security environment.

A press release issued by the office of the Press Secretary of the White House on January 19, 1995, on President Clinton's record of accomplishments on the second anniversary of his inauguration, has a section covering his orientations and achievements in meeting security challenges and [word indistinct] power. The description of the success achieved is issue-specific and country-specific. One can deduce US priorities and attitudes from this statement. It clearly indicates that the US is giving the highest priority to non-proliferation, the extension of the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] as it exists without amendments and to preventing the spread of technologies, including dual-use technologies to other countries. Secondly, the US perceives for itself a direct and active role in managing conflict situations or areas of tension across the globe. It is within this framework that the US is committed to strengthening the UN's more active and intrusive peace-keeping role.

The document also indicates that US foreign economic policies, specially in relation to developing countries, would be predicated on the latter meeting norms of democracy, human rights and non- proliferation, including arms control. There would be differing emphasis and shifts in

US policies towards individual countries determined by US interests relating to each state. But these will not be outside the basic framework of the objectives mentioned. In testimonies given to the US Senate Foreign Relations [words indistinct] Woolsey in early January 1995 and Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Toby Gati emphasised that the US is closely monitoring developments related to nuclear technology, space technology and advance technology of testing, manufacturing and exports in the Asian region. India's attitude and policies towards the US in the remaining part of his decade have to be fashioned in the light of these orientations and objectives.

The end of the Cold War, our economic reforms, our desire for diversifying the sources of inputs for our economic development and defence capacities are factors which should contribute to expansion of the relations. At the same time, our technological, security, and social justice imperatives will result in differences of approach with the US. How we manage this critical factor in our relations with the US will test our foreign policy. Ideological or polemical confrontation is not a practical option. Continuous constructive engagement is the option which we should exercise.

Editorial: 'Set Aside' Fears of Lower Exports

BK0803014895 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 7 Mar 95 p 11

[Editorial: "Exports: so far, so good"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A major apprehension in the last few years has been that exports will falter and India will get into a debt trap as it fails to earn enough foreign exchange to pay back what it borrow from foreigners. But for the time being at least, these fears can be set aside. According to latest estimates, exports in the first ten months of the current fiscal year have gone up by 17.3 percent. The growth has come mainly from manufactures, gems and jewellery and handicrafts. The exports of primary commodities, however, have remained sluggish. Imports, meanwhile, have shot up by 23.55 percent during the same period. This growth is primarily on account of a 31.9 percent jump in non-oil imports, which, in turn, is because of the improved industrial performance. That too is good news. Better still, petroleum, oil and lubricant (POL) imports have declined by 0.76 percent, largely because of a softening of global oil prices.

The export performance is encouraging, the more so as inflation has continued at double digit levels, eroding competitiveness. But clearly, the erosion has not been as much as imagined. This is perhaps because the competitiveness of exports depends not on the nominal value of the exchange rate but on the real effective exchange rate (REER). Also, non-price factors like improvement in quality and infrastructural services can spur export growth. For the moment, these seem to be working in India's favour. How long they will continue to do so remains to be seen. But it is a fair guess that sooner than expected, bottlenecks will appear which could adversely affect exports.

It is difficult precisely to pinpoint all the factors responsible for the sustained increase. A notable feature is the improved performance of the manufactured items as compared to primary commodities, particularly agricultural goods. The export of tea, spices, rice, tobacco, iron ore and jute have been well below target. This is a cause for concern. After all it is well established that India has an comparative advantage in agro- commodities. So what has gone wrong? The slowdown in agro-exports can be attributed to the failure of the government to reform agriculture. The government has not yet devised a way to link domestic prices to international prices. Under a liberalised trading regime prices must act as a signal to the grower to take investment. But in the absence of a price signal, that links domestic to global prices, the farmer is left whistling in the dark. While in some crops like rice and wheat, the domestic price is lower than world prices, in others like edible oils global prices are higher than domestic prices. Also the continuation of the much abused procurement price policy spurs the farmer to produce for the domestic market rather than for export. This, in turn has distorted the overall supply of food grains. Be that as it may, the fact remains that if India wishes to emerge as a major exporter of agro-produce, it will have to reform agriculture. The longer this is delayed, the longer it will take for exports to attain their full potential. The problems are mostly political but none are such that cannot be surmounted. What is needed is some patient effort and explaining to the farm lobbies. Unfortunately, the government has not even begun to address the issues.

Article Views 'Harsh' Human Rights Report

BK0703125395 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 7 Mar 95 p 9

[Article by Kanchan Gupta: "ICJ too harsh on India?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists [ICJ] has just released its report, Human Rights in Kashmir. The much-delayed report has been criticised by the Government of India and the Union Home Secretary, Mr K Padmanabhaiah, has described it as "a totally perverse document".

It may be recalled that the ICJ was the first (and till now the only) international human rights organisation to be allowed to send a mission to Jammu and Kashmir as part of the Government of India's policy of "greater transparency". A four-member team visited the strife-torn State (and later Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir) in August 1993. The report is ostensibly based on the findings of this team.

India's official reaction to the ICJ report, that it is a "document of patent and pronounced bias, lacking in objectivity, historical perspective and accuracy", suggests that the Government's apprehensions about Pakistan having its way with the organisation have come true. These apprehensions were first voiced last year after the ICJ sent a copy of its preliminary report to the governments of India and Pakistan for their comments.

Officials in Islamabad had leaked selected portions of the report to the Pakistani Press, conveying the impression that the ICJ had not only questioned Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India but also severely criticised the violation of human rights by Indian security forces in the Valley.

The ICJ had objected to the Pakistani Government publicising details of the preliminary report. In fact, a source in the ICJ, involved with preparing the report, had said that Pakistan was obviously leaking details with a dual purpose. One, to score propaganda points against India; and, two, commit the ICJ to retaining these portions in the final report. However, the exact nature of the ICJ's admonition remains unknown.

Coming back to the ICJ's final report released last week, it has severely criticised the security forces for violating human rights in the Valley. But, at the same time, it has also held Pakistan guilty of similar violations in Occupied Kashmir and, more importantly, listed the crimes committed by the militants.

Indian security forces, according to the ICJ, "are found to have committed serious abuses of human rights in Kashmir". These include "extra-judicial executions, torture, arson and rape", and "official action to prevent and punish such abuses has been inadequate".

The ICJ, however, has praised the Union Government for "the training in human rights given to the Indian Army" but has called for "improvement in the training of para-military forces" like the BSF [Border Security Force] and the CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force].

Significantly, unlike other reports on Jammu and Kashmir prepared by foreign agencies, the ICJ report has condemned "local militant groups" in no uncertain terms for gross abuses of human rights. The militants have been held guilty of "murder of political opponents, kidnapping and hostage-taking, intimidation of the media and extortion".

The ICJ has also called on the "Government of Pakistan to prevent the supply of finance, weapons and training facilities to the militant groups in Kashmir" and condemned the "absence of constitutional rights in the part of the State under the control of Pakistan".

Therefore, by implication, the ICJ has confirmed that Pakistan is aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. It must also be noted that it has referred to what Islamabad calls "Azad Kashmir" as that "part of the State (of Jammu and Kashmir) under the control of Pakistan".

As for the contentious issue of right to self-determination, it has been dealt with in an appendix to the report. The members of the mission have expressed their opinion that "the peoples of the State acquired a right to self-determination at the time of the partition of India in 1947 and that the right still exists because it has neither been exercised nor abandoned".

This is a flawed assertion as neither the Independence of India Act nor the Memorandum of the Cabinet Mission provided for the right to self-determination. As one of the more than 500 princely states, Jammu and Kashmir had the option of either signing the Instrument of Accession and joining India or Pakistan, or becoming independent with the cessation of British paramountcy.

Interestingly, the ICJ has described Islamabad's demand that a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir be limited to choosing between India and Pakistan as "disastrous". According to the mission members, because of the "extent of support for independence within Kashmir, a single plebiscite of the whole State offering a choice between accession to India or Pakistan would be disastrous".

The members feel that since the "State contains a number of different units (they) should be allowed to exercise the right to self-determination separately—if possible, by a referendum approving a previously negotiated solution".

The Government of India has cricticised the report for primarily three reasons: One, it has relied heavily on "selective readings, published reports and documents, hearsay and an entirely subjective interpretation of all these"; two, "it advocates independence for the Kashmir Valley" and recommends that the people should be allowed to exercise the right to self-determination; and, three, the "mission has scanned history, alternatively tried to freeze it or even rewrite it, to suit their version of the remedy".

While it is true that the Government did allow the team to visit Jammu and Kashmir, the fact remains that the members' movement was restricted, and for good reasons, too. It is also a fact that the team's visit was too short to allow it to collect enough first-hand evidence. Hence, it had to depend on published reports and documents. This does not, however, justify the overemphasis that has been laid on such reports.

As for the ICJ advocating independence for Kashmir, perhaps a closer look at the report would suggest that this is not really as categorical as it is being made out to be. On the contrary, the ICJ appears to have been circumspect on this issue.

To begin with, in the preface to the report the ICJ has drawn attention to what the organisation itself describes as "the highly controversial nature of the right to self-determination". That the ICJ admits that there is no consensus on the right to self-determination, especially on whether it is legally binding on sovereign states, is borne out by the fact that it has decided to convene an international conference of legal experts to "examine this concept".

It is also significant that the mission members' opinion on the right to self-determination has been included in an appendix to the report. No less significant is the fact that the ICJ believes that "full or limited independence for Kashmir is a possible option"—not the only option.

It is possible that had the Government of India put in some more hard work while presenting its brief to the ICJ, the report would have been less offensive to Indian sensitivities. But there was little alacrity in the Government's responses to the ICJ's queries, even after the draft report had been circulated for comments.

Indeed, even while the Pakistani Foreign Office was having a field day using the draft report for mounting a propaganda offensive against India last year, the Union Home Ministry was dawdling over how to respond to the document which one bureaucrat described as an "unexpected hot potato that nobody wants to handle". The Pakistani Government was prompt in despatching a high-level team to Geneva to present its views on the preliminary report; it took more than a month for the Government of India to decide upon whom to send and what to say.

In other words, New Delhi missed an opportunity, though not for the first time, to sell its case on Kashmir. Almost as a rule authors of ICJ reports make appropriate changes in the "light of comments received from the parties concerned". If India has failed to influence changes, then the blame, at least partially, lies with politicians and bureaucrats in New Delhi.

Jammu Pakistan Border Region To Be Sealed

BK0803065995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Center has agreed to fence the India-Pakistan border in Jammu region to check trans-border activities and infiltration by mlitants. Floodlights will be installed along the border to help the security forces keep a vigil on subversive elements. The divisional commissioner of Jammu, Mr. B.R. Kundal, said this in Jammu after two-day meeting of the provincial advisory committee. The meeting recommended multipurpose identity cards to be issued to all citizens in the region. A six-member subcommittee of political leaders and prominent citizens was also set up to create awareness among the people about the activities of anti-national and subversive elements.

Meanwhile, a major tragedy was averted in Jammu when a 25-pound live shell was defused in the city by the bomb disposal squad of the Army. Five of the bombs recovered earlier were also defused.

'3 Foreign Mercenaries' Among Latest Killed

BK0603152495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, latest reports received from Doda say seven militants were killed in the ongoing operation launched by security forces in Gajot area since Friday [3 March] night. They include three foreign mercenaries. Eight rifles and some ammunition have also been recovered.

Meanwhile, two persons were killed and three injured in an explosion in a factory in Jammu today. Police have ruled out any sabotage.

Kashmir Governor Views 'Improving' Situation

BK0803024695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has said that the situation in the Kashmir Valley is improving, with people distancing themselves from militancy. Talking to a group of media persons at the 'Id Milan ['Id al-Fitr party] hosted by him at Jammu last evening, he said majority of the political leaders agree with him on restoration of democracy and holding elections in the state. He said efforts are being made to further improve the situation in the next few months paving the way for elections.

The Janata Dal leader, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, has favored holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that restoration of a democratic set up should be the first priority of any government. Talking to newspersons in Jammu, he however said that the center should assess the ground reality before holding any elections in the valley.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Army has foiled yet another attempt by Pakistan to send in large quantity of ammunition through the northern sector. A militant was killed and another captured elsewhere in the valley during overnight operation. Giving details, a Defense Ministry spokesman told media persons in Srinagar today that Army troops noticed movement of some persons along the 5 km long border belt of Baramula in the northern sector. When challenged by the troops they fled back to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after leaving behind six boxes of ammunition. The spokesman said each box contain 750 rounds for assault rifles. Night patrolling has been intensified along the border to thwart such attempts from across the border to send in trained militants and arms and ammunition.

Paper Calls For Repeal of 'Terrorism' Act

BK0403100295 Calcutta ANANTRIKA in Bengali 17 Feb 95 p 4

[Editorial: "Opposed to Human Rights"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The demand for the repeal of TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Act] is gradually increasing. Recently, 110 MP's submitted a petition to the prime minister seeking the revocation. The petitioners included MP's belonging to the left parties, the National Front, and the Congress-I. The chairman of the National ights Commission, Justice Ranganath Mishra, was very vocal in his demand for the act's cancellation. The prime minister and the home minister co also not deny that excesses are being committed through the enforcement of TADA, and there is no doubt that the abuse has crossed all limits. Statistics from the Home Ministry show that there are 70,000 TADA prisoners in the country. So far it has been possible to prove the guilt of only 2,700, while it has not been possible to file charge sheets against 90 percent of those remaining. The state minister for home, Rajesh Pilot, has himself acknowledged that 95 percent of the cases filed against TADA prisoners have been rejected in court.

It has been alleged that the majority of the victims of TADA are Muslim citizens, who are being detained and held without trial in different states. Though this claim is debatable, there is no doubt that a large number of the victims are Muslims. Kashmir, which is a Muslim majority state, is in the grip of terrorism. Hence, there is an excuse for detaining people without trial here. Similarly, in Maharashtra, due to the evil deeds committed by the Memon [accused in Bombay blasts] brothers, it is possible to explain the detention without trial of a large number of people, mainly Muslims. But it is difficult to find any logic behind the detention of thousands of Muslims, as it is certain that the Memon brothers did not have their own 'army' with numerous people enrolling as paid soldiers. Why has the number of TADA prisoners in Gujarat exceeded 19,000? It is really difficult to find any logic behind it. Needless to say, the majority of these prisoners are Muslims. Gujarat is not infested with terrorism. A devastating Bombay-type explosion incident did not occur here. But, this state has the highest number of prisoners detained without trial. Why? A proper reply is not available from the police. It is not difficult to guess its real cause, which becomes clear if a little attention is paid to the reasons behind the resentment of Muslims in Ahmadabad, Baroda, and Surat. Large-scale violence erupted in these southern Gujarat cities following the demolition of the Babri mosque.

For these reasons, people who have faith in fundamental human rights are demanding that TADA be repealed immediately. However, some are in the favor of the Act's continuance after some amendments. To support their demand, they say this Act was promulgated to check terrorism and secessionism. Hence, it should continue as this danger is still present in certain regions. Several quarters, especially political parties propagating the revival of Hinduism believe TADA should not be lifted completely. Experience has shown that the police have always abused any law that allows for the detention of prisoners without trial. During Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, a law entitled MISA [Maintenance of Internal Security Act] was promulgated to detain people without trial. Then, there was no limit to this law's abuse. Some officials have also admitted that the influence of communalism has increased among the police in different states recently.

Nowadays, TADA is being more implemented in regions where there is no major problem of terrorism or secessionism. It cannot be claimed that TADA has been able to check terrorism in places where terrorists are active. This shows that the main objective behind its promulgation has not been achieved. There is no point in considering amending this Act. It should be annulled. TADA's validity will expire on 23 May. It has been learned that even if it is repealed, the hearing of cases filed or to be filed under TADA will continue. This indicates that the harrasment of people detained under false charges will continue. The question remains: Why will the time limit to prove guilt not be reduced? Besides, it will be an injustice if those against whom it has not been possible to frame charges are not immediately released. This demand has been raised by those who are conscious of human rights. It is necessary to speedily dispose off the cases filed against a handful of persons for which a court hearing is being held. TADA has failed to suppress those indulging in mischief. There is no logic behind continuing this act to persecute good people.

'Moderate to Heavy' Voting in Orissa Polls

BK0803015695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moderate to heavy polling has been reported in the first phase of assembly elections in Orissa. In districts like Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Ganpatty, Deogarh, Bonangir and Koraputt nearly 65 percent voters exercised their franchise. In other places, the polling percentage varied between 55 to 60. Today's poll in 71 constituencies spread over 19 districts decided the fate of 660 candidates, including 16 ministers, two former chief ministers and two former union ministers. Polling began on a dull note due to heavy rains, but picked up later during the day.

Meanwhile, campaigning ended this evening for Thursday's polling in the remaining 76 constituencies in 11 districts. The second phase of polling will decide the fate of 756 candidates, including the chief minister, Mr. Biju Patnaik; several ministers, Assembly Speaker Yudishter Das, the former union minister, Mr. K.C. Lenka; SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party] state unit president, Mr. Vishwabhusan Harchandran, and the vice president of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] state unit, Mr. Samaranjan Patnaik. Over 1 crore 17 lakh electorate are eligible to exercise their franchise in the second phase.

Iran

Commentaries View Christopher's Mideast Tour

'Success Seems Highly Unlikely'

LD0703165095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1105 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to arrive in the Middle East tomorrow for a regional visit. He is to hold talks with leaders of the countries he is scheduled to visit. The agenda of the talks will be the fate of the sell-out plan and the issue of extending the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The most difficult task facing Christopher in this visit is how to break the deadlock in the talks between Syria and Israel. These talks were suspended last December. Thanks to this deadlock, the peace plan for the Middle East region proposed by the United States is in danger. As a result the U.S. Democratic Government, which has suffered numerous defeats in the foreign policy arena, is trying to register one instance of success under its name by breaking this deadlock. Such a success would put a winning card in the government's hand on the eve of the presidential elections in America.

At present the Republicans are gaining repeated victories in various states. Since they have a majority in the U.S. Congress, the Democrats are cornered. The Republicans are, therefore, waiting for yet another failure of the Democrats so as to exploit the situation for propaganda purposes in their own favor.

The Damascus-Tel Aviv talks have come to a halt because Israel is refusing to withdraw its forces from the Golan Heights; Syria, on the other hand, is insisting that the Israeli forces should leave these heights. The United States has repeatedly tried to make the two sides show some flexibility in their demands. However, the Golan Heights are extremely important to Syria and, in view of the fact that the region was part of Syrian territory, the Israeli refusal to show flexibility is interpreted by the Syrians as a threat to their territorial integrity. On the other hand Israel, given its aggressive nature and expansionist policies, is not prepared to withdraw from the Syrian territory it occupied during the 1967 war.

As a result of the U.S. efforts, and in the wake of talks between White House officials and the Zionist regime, Israel has proposed a gradual withdrawal of its forces from the heights. Through this proposal Israel has tried to keep the heights, while depicting a peace-loving picture of itself in order to break the deadlock in the talks with Damascus. This Israeli plan finds an answer to the demands of its strategic ally, the United States, and at the same time provides an effective lever in the talks with Syria. In view of Israel's expansionist policies, the Syrians do not trust Tel Aviv and consider the gradual withdrawal as a way of evading fulfillment of the Syrian demands. They have, therefore, declared that there is no possibility of any compromise with Israel until it withdraws from the occupied territories fully and promptly. One can, thus, conclude that despite the the wholehearted U.S. efforts to break the deadlock in the talks between and Syria and Israel, Warren Christopher's success seems highly unlikely.

Possibility of Success Said 'Extremely Weak'

NC0803090795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 8 Mar 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in the Middle East yesterday to start a fresh mission aimed at getting the Middle East compromise talks out of their deadlock. The U.S. State Department announced in a statement in Washington that the major objective of Christopher's Middle East tour is to create further understanding among Tel Aviv, the PLO, and Arab countries, particularly Syria.

Political analysts believe that since no fundamental changes have been made in the Zionist regime's expansionist stance and the United States—the major element in the compromise process—continues to pursue its unlimited support for the Zionist regime and has not become an impartial mediator, the possibility that Christopher's new mission will succeed is extremely weak.

The Zionist regime is not willing to implement the Oslo pact regarding the PLO and is postponing its withdrawal from a small part of Palestine on various pretexts. It is also pursuing the same policy toward Syria and Lebanon. Tel Aviv opposes the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 on withdrawing from Syria's Golan Heights, constantly making this withdrawal contingent on receiving concessions that violate Syria's territorial unity and independence; this is why all its proposals have met a negative response from Damascus.

And the Zionist regime is not willing to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 on Lebanon. Zionist Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin impudently said that this resolution dates back to the seventies and that since then many changes have taken place on the international scene, Tel Aviv is willing to withdraw from south Lebanon only by taking these changes into consideration. So the Zionist regime is willing to leave south Lebanon only when Beirut recognizes the supremacy gained by the Zionist regime after the oil war and Cold War and if Lebanon is willing to accept this equation.

Russian Delegation Meets With Officials

Duma Speaker Attends Majles Session

LD0803113095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mikhail Mityukov, first deputy speaker of the Russian parliament, who is in Tehran at the head of a delegation, attended today's Majles open session and became familiar with the operations of the

Majles and the legislative process in our country. Welcoming him and his entourage, Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri said such visits are effective and constructive in the expansion of mutual ties.

According to our correspondent's report, the first deputy speaker of the Duma also met and conferred with Deputy Majles Speaker Rowhani today. The expansion of mutual parliamentary relations were discussed at the meeting.

Iran Said 'Crucial Partner' in Region

LD0803110895 Tehran IRNA in English 1047 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA—Senior advisor to Russia's President Boris Yeltsin Andranik Migranyan says Iran is a crucial partner of Russia in the region.

In an exclusive talk to the English-language daily IRAN NEWS, printed Wednesday [8 March], Migranyan said: "Iran is a big power and Russia can cooperate with Iran and solve many problems in the Trans- Caucasus region and Central Asia."

The advisor was here to attend an Irano-Russia round table which ended work Monday.

Saying that the obstacles on the way of developing Iran-Russia ties were the economic hardships both in Russia and Iran, he hoped that with the Russian policy becoming more and more independent, Iran's role in mutual relations would increase as a partner at global and regional levels.

He stressed that "in many areas Iran can be a good and strategic ally of Russia at global level to check the hegemony of third parties and keep the balance of power."

On West's efforts to damage Iran-Russia relations, he believed the role of West in Iran-Russia relations was in decline, adding that "Russia will try to further cooperate with Iran as a big regional power."

"We will not let the West dictate to Russia how far it can go in its relations. Of course, we will try at the same time not to damage our relations with the West," he remarked.

Commenting on the 4th round of the Tajik peace talks, he said: "I think we can do more than what we have already done but at the same time I am afraid that Iran and Russia cannot solve the problem of Tajikistan alone because it is like the problem of Afghanistan. These problems are too big to be solved by Russia and Iran. In my opinion, it is for the world community and the United Nations to take action, despatch some peacekeeping forces in order to try to restore order there."

Migranyan also noted that Iran could use its moral and political influence among Muslim groups in Tajikistan and try to keep them away from fighting.

The Russian advisor noted that the questions of Tajikistan and Afghanistan were not taken seriously by the Western media, adding that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the Western countries have lost their interest in Afghanistan."

Zhirinovskiy Comments in India 'Irresponsible'

LD0703200595 Tehran IRNA in English 1951 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 7, IRNA—Iranian Embassy in New Delhi on Tuesday [7 March] called the statement made by Russian ultra-nationalist, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy against Iran and the Persian Gulf as irresponsible.

Russian leader of Liberal Democrat Party who is on a three-day visit to New Delhi, said on Sunday in an interview with Indian weekly, INDIA TODAY, that India and Russia should have common borders and that it would be possible through conceding a narrow corridor on the part of Afghanistan. Russia would compensate Afghanistan for the corridor by giving some part of its territory or even the Iranian territory.

Zhirinovskiy said that an access to the waters of the Persian Gulf was the dream and a long-standing right of Russia, of which Russia was deprived for different reasons. The situation should change however, he said.

India and Russia should have control over the region, the Russian ultra-nationalist said.

Meanwhile, Zhirinovskiy had said in his interviews with Indian press that Russia should expand its influence on the Central Asian states, Pakistan and Iran.

Iranian Embassy said that the Russian liberal democrat made such a statement at a time when Iran and the Russian Federation strengthen relations on the basis of mutual respect and honouring independence and territorial integrity of each other.

Two Iraqi 'Spies' Arrested in Semnan Province

LD0703204595 Tehran IRNA in English 2035 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Semnan, March 7, IRNA—Director general of Semnan Province Information Department announced that during the past two months two Iraqi spies who had come to Iran for bombing were identified and detained in the province.

Speaking to the reporters in an exhibition held honoring the efforts of the unsung heroes in Semnan Province, he said the detainees have been handed over to the judicial branch.

"Unknown efforts exhibitions" have been held by Semnan Province Information Deparment in coordination with deputy information ministry for internal security affairs in order to let the authorities of province know the machinations of Iran's enemies.

Rahimi Charges Commuted to Firearms Possession

MM0703151595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—An Iranian Government spokesman stressed yesterday that General 'Azizollah Amir Rahimi will stand trial on charges of "possessing firearms illegally." Previous reports said that Rahimi would face charges of attempting to overthrow the government. Analysts believe that the decision to change the charges to minor charges is an attempt by the government to play down the significance of the case brought against the general, who is 73.

Rahimi was arrested last November after publishing a series of articles attacking the government. He also spoke in interviews with foreign media services. His main topic was that the extremist rulers have destroyed the nation's economy, culture, and international reputation, so that they should step down and allow the formation of a more competent government comprised of people who are more responsible.

The authorities have also released the general's son, Mahrdar, 27—which confirms the government's desire to play down the significance of the case brought against the general himself. Mahrdar declined over the telephone to reveal anything. He just said: "All I know is that my father has never acquired any firearms illegally." He also said that his father does not intend to backtrack on his previous statements.

Unconfirmed reports said yesterday that more than 100 retired Army, Navy, and Air Force officers sent a letter to Iranian Guide 'Ali Khamene'i, demanding that the charges against Rahimi be dropped.

Religious Leaders Reject Khamene'i 'Peace' Offer

MM0703161295 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Dispute Escalates Among Political and Religious Leaders in Iran; Montazeri and Qomi Reject 'Peace Offer' From Khamene'i"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Two senior religious leaders in Iran have turned down a "peace offer" made by Supreme Guide 'Ali Khamene'i—which could escalate the current dispute between the political and religious leaderships.

Well-informed sources said yesterday that Ayatollah Hasan Tabtaba'i-Qomi and Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri declined to accept an invitation to a meeting with Khamene'i to discuss "the vital issues concerning the nation's future," because they do not believe that such a meeting is going to produce any results. Qomi lives in Mashhad, where he has been subjected to restrictions for 12 years. But these restrctions have been eased over the past few weeks, and hundreds of his followers and supporters have been allowed to visit him.

Among those who have visited him is 'Abbas Va'ez-Tabasi, Khamene'i's representative. Tabasi proposed during this visit holding a meeting between Khamene'i and Qomi when the supreme guide visits Mashhad after the blessed 'Id al-Fitr, but Qomi diplomatically turned down the invitation.

As for Montazeri, who lives in Qom, he was visited by Khamene'i's representative, who proposed to him holding a similar meeting with the supreme guide. Nasir Tuhami, spokesman for Montazeri, says that the meeting produced no results, because Montazeri expressed willingness to receive Khamene'i like any other visitor, but Khamene'i wants Montazeri to visit him, but Montazeri refused.

Last year Khamene'i avoided an overt confrontation with the Shiite establishment when he decided not to run for the [higher religious] authority post and began to focus on reinforcing his political standing in Iran.

Majles Approves Allocations to Armed Forces

LD0703125695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Majles today continued its debate on the provisions of the budget bill for 1374 [year beginning 21 March 1995] in its second reading. The proposals of the deputies on three more articles were assessed and a number of proposals were approved. Please pay attention to a report by our correspondent:

[Unidentified correspondent] [passage omitted] Based on another article which was assessed, a sum of 2.18 trillion rials will be put at the disposal of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics to be invested within the framework of the programs approved by the Armed Forces general command. It will provide funds to the amount of at least 133 billion rials to pay the debt arrears of the Armed Forces for their water, electricity, fuel, and telephone bills as well as their debt to railway authorities and other obligations. It is stressed in the article that the Armed Forces are duty bound to purchase their required ammunition and military equipment from the Defense Industry Organization, electronic industries, air industry organization, and other domestic producers and should only import those items of military equipment that cannot be manufactured domestically. [passage omitted]

Official on Objections to Funding of HAMSHAHRI

NC0703170895 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 25 Feb 95 p 2

[Interview with 'Ezzatollah Zarghami, deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for parliamentary affairs, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [RESALAT] Has there been any calculation of how much public money has been spent on the HAMSHAHRI newspaper?

[Zarghami] This issue is under discussion in the Guidance Ministry and once it transpires that it should be administered as a private newspaper all the funds that have been used from the Treasury will be returned. This will require a precise inquiry by an accountant. However, this has not been done yet.

[RESALAT] There are some who state that a certain faction has leveled charges against HAMSHAHRI out of opposition to the Tehran mayor. What is your opinion?

[Zarghami] Ever since the issue was raised at the Majles, there are some who believe that this has a political or factional basis aimed at opposing and crushing the political stature of a particular individual. My personal opinion is that even though the Majles has a political bias, it is possible that certain issues assume a political orientation. However, in this particular instance and in view of what I know about Mr. Kuhkan, [Majles deputy], I do not consider this a political matter.

He is one of the most serious and enthusiastic deputies, especially in cultural matters, and has constantly been a true defender of the Culture Department. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] What is the objective of eliminating disbursement of 10 percent of the income from advertisements in the press to the Guidance Ministry from the budget bill?

[Zarghami] According to note 36 of the budget bill, the Guidance Ministry used to receive 10 percent of the sum accruing from press advertisements. In accordance with the press laws, this sum was utilized for increasing press activities and for providing journalistic training courses.

This year, in view of the problems facing the country's press, the Majles decided to waive the 10 percent, which had to be paid from the income received from advertisements and to set up billboards for advertisements all over the city instead. This is because the companies and large organizations have greater resources and 10 percent of whatever they pay the municipality for these billboards will be given to the Guidance Ministry to be spent on journalistic activities. [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Two U.S. Diplomats Killed by Gunmen in Karachi

BK0803061695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0603 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Two U.S. diplomats were shot dead in Karachi this morning. A spokesman of the U.S. Consulate said that unknown gunmen killed the two U.S. diplomats when they were going to their office. Details are awaited. Administration has been alerted for the arrest of the criminals.

Delhi Radio Reports Details

BK0803065395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0635 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Pakistan, two American diplomats have been killed and one wounded by unidentified gunmen. The incident took place this morning at the industrial port city of Karachi. According to police officials, unidentified gunmen ambushed a U.S. Consulate car in eastern Karachi at a traffic junction and critically wounded three diplomats. They were rushed to the hospital where two died. Police officials said no one has claimed responsibility for the attack so far.

Reports say it is the first time that diplomats have been killed in violence in Karachi, which has left over 1,000 people dead since the beginning of 1994. Over 275 people have lost their lives in sectarian, factional, and ethnic violence in Karachi since the beginning of this year.

Government Statement Issued

BK0803102895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1003 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Pakistan Government has strongly condemned the killing of two personnel of the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi. These two diplomats were killed by unknown armed persons in Karachi this morning.

A statement issued in Islamabad today expresses regrets and concern at this barbaric act of terrorism. The statement says the Pakistan Government will make all possible efforts to search for the criminals involved in this heinous crime. Two special investigation teams have been constituted and will work around the clock. The statement adds: it is clear that this tragic incident is related to a well-thought out plan to create fear and panic in the affected areas of Karachi. The Pakistan Government condemns all types of terrorism and it is committed to take all steps to effectively deal with terrorism.

Leghari, Bhutto Condemn Killing

BK0803135595 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Two American employees of the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi, including a woman, were today killed and another wounded when their vehicle was ambushed at Shahrah-e-Faisal [Faisal Road] this morning. According to reports the attack took place during the rush hours this morning when unknown gunmen opened fire on the American Consulate vehicle from a passing car. The vehicle was carrying three staff members of the consulate to work and was attacked as it stopped at a traffic signal near nursery in the District East of the city. The driver of the vehicle, a Pakistani, who escaped unhurt, managed to drive the vehicle quickly to Agha Khan Hospital. One of the Americans, Gary C. Durall, a communications technician, was killed on the spot, while other, Miss Jackie Landigham, a consulate secretary, died in the hospital. The third victim, Mark McCloy, who worked in the consulate's mail room, was wounded and is stated to be in a stable condition.

Pakistan has expressed concern and shock over the tragic killing of the Americans. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto have condemned the killing of the officials of the American Consulate General and expressed sympathies to the members of the bereaved families. The president has directed all authorities to take every necessary measure to apprehend the perpetrators of this heinous crime and to keep him informed of the progress of the case. In a condolence message to President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto conveyed her deepest regrets at the tragic incident. She said: We condemn this heinous crime against innocent people, which is part of a well-planned part of terrorism to create fear and harassment. The prime minister said she has put her senior-most investigators on the job to carry out a full investigation and assured President Clinton that every effort will be made to apprehend the perpetrators of this act of terrorism. [passage omitted]

Police Trace Killers' Car, Detain Suspects

BK0803162195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1543 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 8 (AFP)—Police said Wednesday [8 March] they had found a yellow taxi which they believed was used by two unidentified gunmen who attacked and killed two American diplomats and injured a third here earlier in the day.

Around 30 people have also been detained for questioning, but no arrests have been made yet in connection with the shooting, police said.

The cab was stolen before the shooting and was later found abandoned, a few kilometres (miles) away.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, in a message to US President Bill Clinton, said she had put her "senior-most investigators on the job to carry out full investigation."

President Farooq Leghari said he would personally monitor the progress of the investigation.

A US consulate spokesman said he was not aware of any American investigators arriving in Pakistan to assist in the investigation but did not rule out the possibility.

Six Murders Reported; Karachi Police Reshuffle

BK0803105695 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 8 March 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi—Unidentified killers shot six people to death in different incidents on Tuesday [7 March] while the authorities in a desperate attempt to restore normalcy in Karachi made a big shuffle in city administration.

The Sindh government removed the home secretary, SSPs [Senior Superintendents of Police] of the worst affected district Central and West as well as the Deputy Commissioner, Central district. A senior government functionary said that this is the first phase of reshuffling and more official would be transferred in a couple of days.

Removing AP Kharal from the important post of provincial Home Secretary, Malik Shahid Hamid, presently working as Advisor to Chief Secretary, has been asked to take the charge of the post while his successor was directed to report the Services & General Administration Department (S&GAD) for further order.

The Deputy Commissioner Karachi Central Raisuddin Paracha has been removed from the post and sent to S&GAD. The task to tackle the troubled district has been given Khunsro Pervaiz Khan, who was serving as Deputy Commissioner Khairpur till the date.

The Senior Superintendent of Police of the district, Abdus Sattar Shaikh, has also been removed from the post. Din Mohammad Baloch, who was serving as SP at the Sindh Reserve Police (SPP) has been brought to replace Shaikh who has been sent to SPP.

Likewise SSP Khurram Gulzar of district West has been sent to the Crime Branch of Sindh police as AIG Crimes from where Shahid Nadim Baloch has been transferred to take the charge of SSP West.

Sources in Sindh government hinted that chiefs of police of the remaining districts as well as deputy commissioners will also be reshuffled soon. Sources indicated that deputy commissioner of one the districts is being elevated to head the city administration in place of Mohammad Salim Khan.

Karachi, meanwhile, added six more killings to its rising death toll on Tuesday. Bullet-riddled body of Sub-Inspector Zahoor Ahmed was found dumped in his own Toyota Corolla in Baldia Town on Tuesday afternoon. He was missing since Monday.

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